

P L E A

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FOR THE
SACRAMENTAL TEST;
AS A
JUST SECURITY
TO THE
CHURCH ESTABLISHED,
AND
VERY CONDUCTIVE
TO THE
WELFARE OF THE STATE.

ΟΥΚ ΑΝ ΕΙΣΠΗΞΑΙΜΙ ΤΗΝ ΑΤΗΝ ΟΡΘΗΝ
ΕΤΕΙΧΟΥΣΑΝ ΑΕΤΟΙΕ ΑΝΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΣΤΗΡΙΑΣ.

L O N D O N

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P L E A
F O R T H E
S A C R A M E N T A L T E S T.

THE Protestant Dissenters from the Church of *England* have lately made very great Complaints, of their being obliged to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper *once* in this Church, whenever they take any Office in the State. They have publicly affirmed, that the Laws * by which this is required

* By the 13th of *Charles II.* Stat. 2d. Chap. 1st. it is enacted, That no Person shall be capable of being elected into the Office of Mayor of any City, Town, &c.

quired are *Unjust, repugnant to the End for which this Sacrament was ordained, and productive of much Impiety* in those by whom, in such Cases, it is unworthily received. They have declared their Resolutions of applying to the Legislature for Relief; and in order to do it with the greatest weight, have held several numerous Assemblies of their Friends, in which Committees were appointed to act on their behalf, towards procuring a Repeal of the Corporation and Test-Acts, and were sent, in form, to solicit the Ministers of State on this account. And though, upon the Reports which these Committees made in the Years 1732, and 1733, that those were not *fit Times* for bringing the

or into any other Office concerning the Government of them,—that shall not have, within one Year next before such Election, taken the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the Rites of the Church of *England*.

And by the 25th of *Charles II.* Chap. 2. it is enacted, That all and every Person or Persons that shall be admitted into any Office or Offices, Civil or Military, shall receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, within three Months after his or their Admittance into or receiving their said Authority or Employment, in some publick Church, upon some Lord's Day, commonly called *Sunday*, immediately after divine Service and Sermon.

matter

matter before the Parliament, the Dissenters were prevailed upon to defer it; yet many of them did this with great reluctance, and not without professing that they were determined, very soon to pursue this point with all possible vigour. According to which Resolutions, they have been ever since making such Applications as they judged would be most serviceable to their Cause.

IN this state of things, it cannot but be right in any one who approves the Establishment of the Church of *England*, to vindicate, as far as he can, those Laws which contribute very much to its support, from the Charges made upon them, and to shew that they are not only *just*, but *expedient* to be continued. This has indeed been done, some time ago, by an excellent Writer*, who fixed upon the true Principle for the defence of these Laws, and said as much as was then necessary to maintain it. But as, since that time, some Objections have been made, and the general Principle has with great

* Dr. *Sherlock*, at present Lord Bishop of *Sarum*, in his Vindication of the Corporation and Test-Acts. *Lond.* 1718.

freedom been treated as false; it may be not improper to offer some farther thoughts upon this subject. I purpose to do it in the following Papers; with regard to which, I have only to desire, that they may be read, as I write them, with hearty concern for the lasting Safety and Welfare of our Country.

IN order to vindicate the Laws which enjoin the Sacramental Test, the first step must be to clear them from the charge of *Injustice*, which the Dissenters make upon them, in very inviously aggravating terms. They endeavour to make good this charge by alledging, that as Free-born Subjects, and well-affected to the Civil Government, they have a natural Right to a capacity of serving their Country in all Publick Offices; which they might often do to it's great advantage. But the Laws that oblige them, as a necessary condition of their holding Offices, to communicate with the Church of *England*, do, without just reason, *intrench upon*, and in the case of many of them, *quite defeat* this capacity of Offices to which they have a Right; and therefore those Laws are *unjust*. This I think is the reasoning of the Dissenters upon
this

this subject, in its utmost force. In opposition to which, I humbly conceive, that the *Restraining Condition* thus put upon their capacity of Offices is *just*; in regard that if *all* Protestant Dissenters were capable of holding publick Offices, without the Sacramental Test, or some other equivalent means of excluding those who are *so averse* to the Church of *England*, as to think that Communion with Her is *unlawful*; the consequence would be, that the *E-stablishment* of this Church, which is of great advantage to the State, would be *endangered*; and this danger would produce Animosities and Contests among the People, which would be of very ill consequence to the Safety or the Interest of the *State*: and therefore the Dissenters capacity of Offices is justly restrained, on a Principle generally acknowledged to be true; to wit, that the Civil Rights of Subjects ought to be submitted to, and may be diminished for the Publick Good. I have given our whole reasoning thus in short, and without disguise, that the reader may the better make a judgment of it; for in a matter of this consequence to our Country, or indeed in any

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question.

question debated in publick, to raise clouds of dust in order to cover a bad cause, is a procedure unworthy of a man of probity, with whom no Motives ought to prevail above his regard for *Truth* and *Right*. But that the force of this argument may be duly apprehended, it will be necessary to make some enlargement upon the several particulars it contains.

FOR which purpose, the first point to be considered is, Whether the admission of the Protestant Dissenters to a capacity of Offices, without some such restraint as the Sacramental Test, will not, in the natural course of things, *endanger* the present *Establishment* of the Church of *England*? That the Presbyterians, who of all the Sectaries come the nearest to this Church in doctrine and discipline, would yet *desire* the subversion of her Establishment, if they had power to effect it, Mr. *Rapin Thoyras*, who knew them well, and was not prejudiced against them, was entirely satisfied *. And it must indeed be evident, to any

* *Dissertation sur les Whigs et les Tories*, tom. x. de l'Histoire d'Angleterre, a la Haye 1727, p. 253. Il est certain que si les Presbyteriens se voyent jamais en état d'agir

any one who considers the general dispositions of the bulk of mankind, together with the history of our own nation. Men are naturally desirous that their own way of thinking should prevail. They are wont to approve and favour persons of the same opinion with themselves, in preference to others; especially when they think, not only that their own opinions and practices are *right*, but that those of their opponents are *sinful*, and that therefore it will be for the honour of God to have the latter be suppressed, and their own be promoted. Inducements of this kind are generally sufficient to put them upon endeavouring to spread their own notions; but most of all, when any *secular Advantage* may be gained by so doing; for then human passions, mixed and covered with religious pretences, and thereby appearing to be justified, make them frequently act with extraordinary vehemence.

d'agir sans opposition, ils ne seront point contents qu'ils n'aient ruiné, de fond en comble, la Hierarchie, et en general toute l'Eglise Anglicane. It is certain, that if ever the Presbyterians are in a condition to act without being opposed, they will never be contented till they have totally destroyed the Hierarchy, and in general the whole Church of England.

THESE

THESE are so much the common workings of human nature, that the Law-givers in all States have thought themselves obliged to guard in some degree against them, for fear of their producing such enmities and contests among the Subjects, of different Religions, as might in the end disturb the Publick. Accordingly, as it has been a Maxim in all civilized States, to establish some Religion; so whenever there has been *any* other Religion professed by such numbers of the Subjects, as to be likely to rise into competition with the established one, the Governors have always thought it fit that publick Offices of trust and profit should be confined, as far as the circumstances of the State would allow, to the professors of the latter; in order to give it such a superiority as would be requisite to preserve the publick Peace. I need not give instances of this conduct to those who are competently skilled in History: they must know it has been generally used by the wisest and best-governed Nations in the world.

SOME few Instances indeed may be given of Countries, in which there have not been either any Laws excluding all Non-conformists

to the Established Religion from Employments in the State, or any Religious Tests designed for that purpose; but their Governors have been at liberty to give Offices to such persons when they should think it proper, and have actually employed them upon some occasions. The Dissenters alledge, that this is the case in the United-Provinces of the *Netherlands*, and in some parts of *Germany*. But in answer to these instances, I must observe, that the political Constitutions of those Countries are so different from that of *England*, that no just argument can be drawn, from their practice on some particular occasions, to prove what ought to be done among us. In those Countries, no Offices of trust or profit, and much less any Seats in the Legislature, can be obtained by applications to the *People only*, without the approbation of persons in the Government. For even in * *Holland*, the Burghers at large of the several Towns, have no share at all in the choice of Deputies to the States, nor of their own Magistrates, Senators, or other persons in Employ-

* See Sir *William Temple's* Observations upon the United Provinces of the *Netherlands*, chap. 2.

ments, civil or military. The right of chusing all these, and disposing of all Posts of trust or profit, lies either in the Senate of each Town, or in the provincial or general States. And a very great majority of these being *Calvinists*, they have it in their power effectually to hinder persons of any other Religion from coming in among them; so that they have *no need* of any positive Law, or any Religious Test to exclude them. And the like means of exclusion are equally *needless* in *Prussia*, and other parts of *Germany*; in which the Princes being *absolute*, have the Magistracies, and every thing else at their own disposal, if they think fit; and therefore they need not fear having more persons than they desire in Publick Posts, of a Religion different from the established one. They want no standing Laws to keep them out. And yet it is farther observable, that, even in those Countries, the Non-conformists thus employed have generally been but *few at a time*, they appear to have been taken rather out of necessity, or particular convenience to the State, than out of free choice, and they have been made use of in those cases only, when there has been no ground

to apprehend that the Religion of the State would be endangered or affected by them: all which circumstances plainly shew, that those Nations which at any time have taken this course, have been as sensible as others of the natural disposition men have to promote their own Religion, and that therefore due care ought to be taken, not to trust much power in the hands of persons ill affected to that Religion which is established.

Now, are the Dissenters from the Church of *England* to be more safely trusted than any other men in any age or country of the world? Are they free from the common passions and desires of mankind? Will they have no zeal for propagating their opinions in Religion, nor any concern for advancing their secular Interests? Will they never want to have a share of those Revenues and Privileges which the Church of *England* enjoys, exclusive of them? Will they never be uneasy at being forced to contribute to the maintenance of the Clergy of that Church, which they think so exceptionable? Would they not, if they had power sufficient, endeavour to put themselves and their Religion upon a

more advantageous foot? Perhaps some persons among them, who know what their present Interest requires, may smoothly profess that they shall not aim at any thing more than an Abolition of the Test. But the *bare professions of Interested Parties*, cannot justly expect to have credit given them, in a point of great importance to the Publick. There ought to be somewhat better grounds, for making a judgment of what may probably be expected from the Dissenters, in case they should be trusted with so much power, as I shall hereafter shew that the Repeal of the Corporation and Test-Acts would let fall into their hands. And one of the best means to judge rightly what they would do for the future, is to consider both what the Temper and Conduct of their Predecessors in the Separation, have all along been towards the Church of *England*, and how far the present Dissenters appear to resemble them: for the like dispositions and opportunities, will be apt to produce the like effects, in every age. Let us then take a short and general view of the Conduct and Temper of the Dissenters, since their

first put themselves and their Religion upon a more

first Separation from the Church, 'till the present time.

THE first objections made by the *Puritans* against the Church, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, were chiefly on account of the *Habits* that were enjoined to be used by the Clergy, and of the *Ceremonies* to be practised by them and the People in the Publick Worship. These *Habits* and *Ceremonies* were in great measure the same that are at present used in our Church: and were then retained by the Queen, not out of any superstitious regard to them, (for she expressly and publickly declared the contrary) but partly, in order to maintain a fit Decency in the Worship of God, and much more, out of a charitable desire to keep as many as possible of the middle and lower sort of people in the Communion of the Church. The Queen well knew that they were very much taken with outward Forms, and were averse to have any great alterations made in that Religion which they had been used to. While, therefore, she laid aside all those things that were really *unlawful*, she thought it would be expedient to let the ministering *Habits*, and a few other such things

things, *indifferent* in their nature, continue to be used ; because these might contribute greatly to keep many of those people in the Church, and thereby get time for their being better instructed, and fixed in her Communion, who if they had seen all the Forms of Publick Worship at once entirely changed, would, probably, have been so much shocked and offended, that they would have gone over to the Church of *Rome*. This design, and the success of the Queen in her proceedings, were plainly acknowledged even by *Sanders*, a Popish Writer*, who says that “ the contributed very much to
 “ the Firmness and Establishment of her He-
 “ refy, by not leaving the affair [of the Refor-
 “ mation] to the humourfome management of
 “ the new Clergy, by whose Gospel-Liberty,
 “ it had long since gone off into smoke ; un-
 “ less it had, by this human policy, been kept
 “ in bounds and supported.” As these were

* *Nicol. Sanderi Historia Schismatis Anglicani. Colonia Agrippina, Anno 1628. pag. 283. Certe fecit plurimum ad stabilitatem firmitatemque Hæreseos, quod non permittebatur res, istius novi Cleri libidini, quæ jamdudum hac libertate Evangelicâ abiisset in fumum, nisi fuisset hac humanâ Politia & sustentata & frænata.*

sufficiently

sufficiently known to be the motives of the Queen's conduct, and as the things enjoined were really indifferent in their own nature, it is wonderful that so much difficulty could be made about them. However, as some of those who at first had scruples, were men of otherwise valuable characters, and peaceably disposed, the Queen was willing to connive at their Non-conformity, in hopes that Time would soften and dissolve their groundless prejudices. She not only bore, for several years, with their irregularities of this kind, but permitted many of them to continue possessed of their Benefices, and even Dignities in the Church. But this forbearance on her part was far from having it's desired effect. The Puritans grew more attached to their principles, and more violent in their conduct. They openly declared against all Impositions in Religion, though of things indifferent in their own nature, and enjoined by the highest Authority in Church and State. They resolved not to be quiet, unless the Publick Establishment was altered, and their own favourite Platform of Church-Government and Discipline was settled in its room. They made

no scruple to affirm publicly in formal admonitions to the Parliament, that this ought to be done; and when they found that applications of this kind would not gain their point with the Queen, who, for reasons that will hereafter be mentioned, was not inclined to favour them, they resolved to proceed in other methods. They fell into all the popular ways they could contrive, to recommend their own Scheme of Worship and Discipline, and make the Liturgy and Government of the Church Established, odious in the Nation. Particularly, they treated the Bishops and Clergy with grossly* indecent and

* Mr. Cartwright, in his publick Lectures at Cambridge, as Lady Margaret's Professor, declared, " That
 " in the Church of England there was no lawful ordi-
 " nary Calling of Ministers, nor any Ministry; That the
 " Election of Ministers and Bishops at this day was Ty-
 " rannous; and that Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, and
 " Archdeacons, were but Offices and Names of Impiety."
 Strype's *Life of Archbishop Parker*, pag. 312.

" Our Bishops, said others of the Puritans, are proud,
 " popish, presumptuous, paltry, pestilent, and pernicious Prelates; they are Usurpers, they are cogging
 " and cozening Knaves; the Bishops will lye like dogs.
 " They are Limbs of Antichrist, monstrous ungodly
 " Wretches, that to maintain their own outrageous proceedings, mingle Heaven and Earth together." Strype's

Life

opprobrious language. In the year 1566, they actually separated from the Church, they soon after put their own Discipline into practice * in those parts of the Kingdom where their influence was the greatest, and in some of their writings gave out open Menaces † against the Civil

Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 298. More Language of this kind might be produced, if it was proper to trouble the Reader with it.

* *Strype's Life of Archbishop Whitgift, page 290, and 327.*

† Speaking of their own Discipline, which they call the Cause of God, they say, "that if it come in by that means which will make your hearts ake, blame yourselves; for it must prevail, malgre the malice of all that stand out against it, or such a Judgment must overtake the Land, as shall cause the ears that hear thereof to tingle." *Strype's Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 333, 334.*

One of them (*Payne*) in a Letter written to his friend, says, "It is more than time to register the names of the fittest and hottest of the brethren round about their several dwellings, whereby to put *Suecanus's* good counsel in execution, to wit, that if the Magistrate will not, then to erect it themselves."

Another braggeth of "an hundred thousand Hands, and wisheth the Parliament to bring in this Reformation, though it be by withstanding the Queen's Majesty."

Others exhort their friends to "buckle with the Bishops, and to massacre those *Matkin's* Ministers. Let the Devil and his Deputies the Bishops do what they can: in

Civil Government itself, if it would not comply and *establiſh* their Scheme. These factious Proceedings were the true reasons, as that wise and good Statesman * *Sir Francis Walsingham* observes,

“ the mean time, let us take our pennyworth of them,
“ and not die in their debts.” *Strype's Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 334.*

* In his Letter to Mr. Critoy, in *Burnet's Hist. Re-
form.* vol. 2. p. 388. he says of the Puritans, “ That
“ for a great while, when they inveighed against such
“ Abuses in the Church as *Pluralities, Non-Residence,*
“ and the like, their zeal was not condemned, only their
“ violence was sometimes censured. When they refused
“ the use of some Ceremonies and Rites, as superstitious,
“ they were tolerated with much connivance and gentle-
“ ness: yea, when they called in question the Superiority
“ of Bishops, and pretended to a *Democracy* in the
“ Church, their Propositions were here considered, and
“ by contrary Writings debated and discussed. — But
“ now of late years, when there issued from them those
“ that affirmed, *the Consent of the Magistrate was not to*
“ *be attended;* when under pretence of a Confession, to
“ avoid slander and imputations, they combined them-
“ selves by *Classes and Subscriptions;* when they descended
“ into that vile and base means of *defacing the Govern-
“ ment of the Church by ridiculous Pasquils;* when they
“ began to make many Subjects in doubt to take oaths,
“ which is one of the fundamental parts of Justice in
“ this Land, and in all places; when they began both
“ to want of their *Strength and Number of their Parti-
“ zans and Followers,* and to use *Comminations* that their
“ Cause would prevail through *Uproar and Violence;*
“ then

observes, why Queen *Elizabeth* altered her conduct towards them, and used greater severity than she had done before. She saw that neither her legal Prerogative, nor the Peace of the Kingdom could be preserved, unless their turbulent spirit was restrained; and she was therefore obliged to practice some rigours, which at first were no part of her intention.

THE same reasons determined King *James* the First and King *Charles* the First, to imitate her conduct. But the wrong measures of those two Princes, as to Civil Government, having given the Puritans who opposed the Court, the advantage of becoming popular, and appearing to contend for the Liberties of the Nation, their Party encreased so much in that Parliament of 1641, that at length, by a course of measures sometimes very artful, and at other times tumultuous, they obtained, what they had been so long endeavouring, the abolition of the Pre-

“ then it appeared to be no more Zeal, no more Con-
 “ science, but mere Faction and Division. And there-
 “ fore, though the State were compelled to hold some-
 “ what a harder hand to restrain them than before, yet
 “ it was with as great moderation as the Peace of the
 “ State or Church would permit.”

lacy, Worship, and Discipline of the Church of *England*, and the exaltation of their own Presbyterian Scheme in their room. And how did they use their power when they had it? Did they suffer the Clergy to retain their Benefices and Preferments? or did they allow any Congregations, or private Persons, a liberty to worship God according to the Service of the Church of *England*? On the contrary, besides the attempts they made, by methods of iniquity, to blast the Reputation of many of the Clergy, they required them * *all* to take that *Solemn League and Covenant*, with which they knew that the faithful Sons of the Church of *England* could not comply; and those who refused it, they not only threw out of all their *Preferments*, but generally sequestered their Temporal Estates, if they had any such; and on every, the least pretence, found means, by the

* By a joint Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, Feb. 2, 1643, it was provided, That the *Covenant* should be taken in all places throughout the Kingdom of *England* and Dominion of *Wales*, by *all* above the age of eighteen. And that the Committees of Parliament should *summon all the Ministers, and cause the Covenant to be tendered to them.* Walker on the *Sufferings of the Clergy*, p. 106.

the Civil or Military Power, to harrafs and oppress them. In like manner the Gentry, and others of the Laity, besides the great hardships many of them suffered in their * *temporal* Concerns, were *all* prohibited to use, or cause to be used, even in Private, the Liturgy of the Church of *England*†. In case they did so, they forfeited for the first offence, five pounds; for the second, ten pounds; and for the third, were to suffer a year's imprisonment. Such Rigours of different kinds were continued, 'till the Body of the Nation, unable to bear them any longer, most gladly restored King *Charles* the Second; with whom the Church of *England* recovered her Rights.

AT this time, we may reasonably suppose that the spirits of the Dissenters were much less violent than before; and we are therefore not to wonder, if they were somewhat inclined to an *Accommodation* with the Church of *England*.

And
* In the year 1643, the Lords and Commons made an Ordinance, That *none* should bear Office or Trust in their Armies, or in the Kingdom, but such as had taken the Covenant; nor even they themselves, if they had formerly been imprisoned or sequestered upon Suspicion of Malignancy. Echard's *Hist. of Engl.* vol. 2. p. 458.

† Scobel's *Collect. of Acts*, &c. cap. 57.

And yet there was a remarkable Incident in the Conference held for that purpose in the *Savoy*, which shews what a Disposition they still were in, with regard to this Church. The Commissioners on her part, desired them to propose what Amendments they thought necessary to be made in the Book of Common-Prayer. This Service had been at first composed, in the Reign of *Edward* the Sixth, by the united labours of a number of the most eminent Divines, of whom some, in the following Reign, were Martyrs, and others were Confessors in Exile, for the sake of their Religion. After several reviews, it had been approved by the highest Authority in the Nation at home, and by Protestants of eminent character abroad*. However, in compliance with

* The celebrated *Grotius*, in a Letter to his Brother dated April 8, 1645, says, "That the English Liturgy was always accounted the best by learned Men." See *Le Clerc's* Edition of *Grotius* on the Truth of the Christian Religion, translated by Dr. *John Clarke*, p. 331. where there are several proofs of the great Respect which *Grotius* had for the Church of England.

The learned *Spanheim*, writing to Archbishop *Usher* from Geneva, in 1638, says, "I often call to mind that
"pleasing Face of things in your Church; that Reverence
"in the Publick Worship of God, that Attention and
"Fer-

with the Scruples of the Presbyterians, the Commissioners were disposed to hear and examine the Alterations they should offer: but instead of proposing any particulars, they thought fit to throw aside the whole Liturgy at once, as hardly possible to be corrected *, or rendered useful, and gave in a new one, drawn up entirely by Mr. *Baxter*. There needs no great penetration, to discover from what Spirit such a piece of behaviour flowed, and how it might probably exert itself at more favourable opportunities. And can we then wonder, that the Church was somewhat afraid to lay herself open to Men of that cha-

“ Fervour of your Countrymen in the Service of God, —
 “ the like to which you will hardly find elsewhere.”
Epist. Ded. part 3. Dub. Evang.

Mr. *Gaches*, whom Dr. *Calamy* in his Abridgment of Mr. *Baxter's* Life, pag. 568. stiles a famous Preacher at *Charenton*, speaking of the Liturgy of the Church of England, says, “ I have read it a long time ago, and was
 “ wonderfully edified by it.” *Direl. of the Government and Worship of the Reformed Churches, Lond. 1662. p. 66.* In which book are many other Testimonies of foreign Divines to the same purpose.

* Mr. *Pierce*, in his *Vindication of the Dissenters*, 2d Edit. Lond. 1718, p. 225. says, “ That the very
 “ Form of the English Liturgy was disliked by the Mi-
 “ nisters, and they thought it much easier to draw up a
 “ new one, than to mend the old one.”

character, by taking them into her Establishment? Indeed, the Presbyterians were the less solicitous about being received, because they were encouraged by promises from the Court, that they should be taken care of, and have favour shewed them, if they continued in a Body, and formed an Interest separate from the Church. The design of the Court in applying thus to them, was really, that by keeping them up, as a Set of People who were likely to be tolerated, they might gain at the same time, a Toleration for the Papists, about whom the King and the Duke of York were heartily concerned. Whether the Presbyterians in general suspected this design, I will not positively affirm, though some of them have not scrupled to acknowledge it *. But there is ground, at least, to think that their

* Mr. Pierce, in his *Vindication of the Dissenters*, p. 228, says, "That the despised Presbyterians were not so stupid, as not plainly to perceive at what King Charles was driving." If this was true, is it not very strange they should cultivate an Interest at Court, so much as even Dr. Calamy allows they did? who in his Letter to Archdeacon Echard, Lond. 1718. pag. 71, hath these words, "That the Presbyterian Ministers, both then and afterwards, depended on a Court-Interest, more than they had any just ground for, I believe to be very true."

their views of being supported, and continuing separate from the Church, were much more agreeable to the Chiefs of the Dissenters, than the making any considerable advances on their part, in order to be taken into her Communion.

THIS appears by their conduct, with regard to the Endeavours used not long afterwards, by some persons of eminence and distinguished moderation in our Church, to bring them into it. In 1668, Lord-Keeper *Bridgman*, Lord-Chief-Justice *Hale*, and two or three Divines at their request, had Conferences for this purpose with some leading Presbyterians; but found them so backward to make any reasonable advances, or adhere to those that they seemed to make, that they grew weary of treating with them. Dr. *Calamy* in his Letter to Archdeacon *Echard*, p. 75. seems unwilling to believe the truth of an account given to this purpose in his *History of England*, vol. 3. p. 237. but he does not venture to contradict it, and his caution was just; for it might have been supported by a positive declaration made by Dr. *Burton**, who had

* See a *Vindication of the Rights of Ecclesiastical Authority*, by *William Sherlock*, D. D. Lond. 1685. p. 188.

been Chaplain to the Lord-Keeper, and was one of the persons employed by him in this Negotiation. And this may be thought very probable to have been the real Disposition of the Presbyterians at that time, if we consider the account which Dr. *Calamy* himself has given of them, in his Abridgment of the Life of *Baxter*, p. 598. where he says, that about the year 1672, “ *so*
 “ *ill a spirit* was got among some of them,
 “ who but just before were in a suffering con-
 “ dition, that many were much offended at
 “ Mr. *Baxter*’s preaching for Union, and a-
 “ gainst Division, or unnecessary withdrawing
 “ from each other, and unwarrantable narrow-
 “ ing of the Church of Christ.” We see that the Dissenters could hardly bear with even those among themselves, who were for counsels of peace, and endeavoured to make them less averse to the Church of *England*: from whence we may conclude, that they were in no fit temper for a Treaty with her. “ Accordingly, in
 “ the year 1681, when a Bill of Comprehen-
 “ sion was offered by the Episcopal Party in
 “ the House of Commons, by which the Pres-
 “ byterians would have been taken into the
 “ Church,”

“ Church,” we are told by a Writer of those times, “ that to the amazement of all people, “ their Party did not seem concerned to promote it ; on the contrary, they neglected it. “ And that this increased the Jealousy, *as if “ they hoped they were so near carrying all before them, that they despised a Comprehension.”*

THE truth is, the Dissenters were, about this time, much exalted in their hopes, by observing what a change had happened in the temper of the Nation, to the disadvantage of the Bishops and the Clergy. The Bishops had made themselves very unpopular, by adhering to the Court, in some points of importance then in agitation ; which though they might do with a good conscience, as thinking the measures of the other party were too violent and dangerous, to be for the true Interest of the Nation, yet so great was the ferment which had been raised by the Popish Plot, that many were highly offended with them, and with the Clergy in general, for acting as they did, and not falling into the warmest measures of opposition to the Court. Not a few, even of the Church, were alienated from

them in their affections on that account. And of this the Dissenters were so much disposed to make an advantage, that as we are informed by the Historian last mentioned *, who was never violent against them, " They behaved themselves
 " *very indecently*: for though, says he, many
 " of the most moderate Clergy were trying if
 " advantage might be taken from the ill state
 " we were in, to heal those Breaches that were
 " among us, they, on their part, fell severely
 " upon the Body of the Clergy." And presently afterwards he adds, " That the Presb being
 " open, became very licentious, both against the
 " Court and the Clergy. And *in this the Non-*
 " *conformists had so great a hand*, that the
 " Bishops and Clergy apprehending that a *Re-*
 " *bellion*, and *with it the pulling the Church to*
 " *pieces, was designed*, set themselves, on the
 " other hand, to write against the late Times,
 " and to draw a parallel between the present
 " Times and them." He is so impartial, indeed, as to acknowledge that this parallel was not decently enough managed, by those who undertook the argument on the behalf of the
 " Clergy ;

* Burnet's *History of his own Times*, Vol. I. p. 461.

Clergy; he means, I suppose, that the Writers on that side reproached the Dissenters too severely, with their former treatment of the Crown and the Church: but as occasion was given to these reproaches, by fresh provocations of the same kind, we cannot think it strange, that they were made with some severity. But, however that might be, the Reader will perceive that this conduct, on the part of the Dissenters, did not look like a design of ever coming into the Church, but rather, of pursuing the same course they had taken before, to ruin her Establishment, and raise one of their own in its stead.

AND to this, it is probable they might be not a little encouraged by what they saw done at that time in *Scotland*. About the year 1670, * Bishop *Leighton*, and others of moderate Principles in that Church, wherein Episcopacy was then the Established Government, had been endeavouring earnestly to promote an Accommodation between the Church and the Presbyterian Party. To which end, they were willing to desist from some points of Superiority and Juris-

* Burnet's *History of his own Times*, Vol. I. p. 290,—
297.

Jurisdiction over the Clergy, which had been always claimed as the certain Rights of the Episcopal Order, and were really warranted by the practice of the Church in it's three first ages. Bishop *Leighton* entreated the Presbyterians, that considering the unhappy effects of Schism, and the Moderation of the Church in making such advances, they would not be wanting on their part to accept these terms, which they might do with honour, as well as justice, and so restore an Union exceedingly necessary for the interest of Religion. But they were quite unmoved by all that he could say. They hoped, that by keeping their own Party united, they should, at some time or other, oblige the Civil Government to come in with them. So instead of making any steps on their side, towards an agreement, they endeavoured to keep up the spirits of their people, in expectation that at a proper juncture, they might work their way over the head of the Church. And indeed, at the Revolution in 1688, this happened as they expected. By their falling in with it, while the *Scottish* Bishops, and many of the Clergy stood out against it, King *William* was induced

to

to the Abolition of Episcopal Government, and the Establishment of the Presbyterian in that Kingdom. And when the Gentlemen of this persuasion had once the power in their hands, they treated the poor Episcopal Clergy in the like, and even a worse manner, than they had before been used in *England*, when the Presbyterians prevailed there. Bishop *Burnet* tells us*, "that in the West of *Scotland* they
 "generally broke in upon the Episcopal Clergy
 "with great insolence, and much cruelty: they
 "carried them about the Parishes in a mock
 "Procession: they tore their Gowns, and
 "drove them from their Churches and Houses:
 "Nor did they treat those of them who had ap-
 "peared very zealously against Popery, with
 "any distinction." And whoever will read five Tracts written at that time, concerning the state of the Episcopal Clergy, and an answer to them by Mr. *Rule*, may from them, and even from some concessions made by the latter, find reason to think that Bishop *Burnet* did not exceed the truth in his account.

IN

* *History of his own Times*, Vol. I. p. 805.

IN the other two Kingdoms, the Revolution did not produce so great effects, to the advantage of the Dissenters. But as the success of their friends in *Scotland*, and the hopes they themselves entertained from King *William*, gave them high spirits, so where-ever they had any opportunity, they shewed sufficiently what they would be at, if they had power in their hands. In some parts of *Ireland*, the Presbyterians, being very numerous, used their Wealth and Interest as far as they could, to bear hard upon their Neighbours of the Established Church, in the way of Trade, and in other respects, that so they might be obliged, for their own security, to leave her Communion. Of this the Bishop of *Derry*, in his second Admonition to the Dissenters of his Diocese *, publickly complained. “ Some of your Teachers, says he, *p.* 120. seem to be of “ as persecuting a spirit as the Papists, and “ have so far influenced the most zealous of “ their Hearers, that they already persecute, as “ far as they have power, those that dissent “ from them; insomuch, that as I observed before,

* Dated *March* 13, 1695, and Printed at *London*, 1696.

" fore, *some that are heartily desirous to come*
 " *to Church, dare not, for fear of being un-*
 " *done by their Neighbours.*" And that this ac-
 count was not aggravated, but that these Op-
 pressions were continued, has appeared since
 very plainly, by a Representation from the
 House of Lords of *Ireland* to *Queen Anne*, of
 which the substance was as follows: That the
 Dissenters had opposed and persecuted the Con-
 formists, in those parts where their power pre-
 vailed, had invaded their Congregations, and
 propagated their Schism in places where it had
 not the least footing formerly ;—That they re-
 fused to take Conforming Apprentices, and con-
 fined Trade among themselves, exclusive of the
 Conformists; That in their illegal Assemblies,
 they had prosecuted and censured their People
 for being married according to Law; That they
 had thrown publick and scandalous reflections
 upon the Episcopal Order, and upon our Laws,
 particularly the Sacramental Test; and had
 misapplied the Royal Bounty of 1200 *l. per*
ann. in propagating their Schism, and under-
 mining the Church; and had executed an il-
 legal Jurisdiction in their Presbyteries and Sy-
 F nodes,

nods, &c. We see here what a Spirit they shewed, and what use they made of their Power, as far as it would go.

THEY had less encouragement to do any thing of this kind in *England*, because the Body of the Nation was heartily disposed to support the Church. But the Dissenters presuming more perhaps than they had reason, upon their interest in King *William*, and hoping that the weight of the Court might go far in their behalf, did soon make some publick steps which shewed what their views were even in this Kingdom. Sir *Humphry Edwin*, who was Lord-Mayor of *London* in 1698, thought fit to go, with the Ensigns of his Magistracy, to a Dissenting Meeting. When this was complained of, by some Writers on the side of the Church, the Dissenters answered in such a manner as shewed plainly how far they carried their pretensions. One who wrote on their behalf some time after this affair, was Mr. *James Pierce*, whom I quote the rather, because he declares in the Preface of his Book *, that it had given *good satisfaction universally to his brethren*, when it was published.

* *A Vindication of the Dissenters, &c.*

lished in *Latin*, and that it was the general opinion of his friends, that the putting it into *English* might be of service: so that this Author may be justly considered as one who may let us know the *general* Disposition of the Dissenters towards the Church of *England*. Now he, speaking of this action of Sir *Humphry Edwin*, p. 276. of the first part of his *Vindication*, has these words: “ If the Laws permit
 “ the Lord-Mayor to frequent our Assemblies,
 “ why might not he carry those Ensigns [of his
 “ Magistracy] with him? ——— One would
 “ think the Church looks upon those Fine
 “ Things as *her Property*, or supposes they have
 “ been *hallowed* by some Bishop, and so were
 “ profaned by being carried into any Place of
 “ Worship not first consecrated by one of that
 “ Order.” This Gentleman must have known, that the Church of *England* does not look upon those Ensigns of Magistracy as hallowed, nor pretends any other claim to them, than as she is the Church established by Law; which may justly entitle her to some degrees of respect, not claimable by Dissenting Congregations, which are only Tolerated. But this reason, it seems,

was not thought of any weight by our author ;
 for p. 278, he affirms, that “ the Religion of
 “ the Dissenters is *as truly established* as that of
 “ the Church of *England*.” And again in the
 same place, “ I acknowledge, says he, that the
 “ Church of *England* was *formerly* the *only*
 “ *Religion Established* by Law ; but when the
 “ old severe Laws against us were repealed, and
 “ a new one was enacted, that left every one
 “ to his own judgment in the choice of his Re-
 “ ligion ; how can our Religion be said not to
 “ be established ?” And he is not contented to
 have raised their Sect into an Establishment,
 and thereby into a Competition with the Church
 of *England*, but he goes on to insult those of
 her Communion, who might be uneasy on that
 account. “ Oh Men of *Israel* ! says he, come
 “ in from all Quarters, and help the Distressed,
 “ whose sorrowful case is, since the first starting
 “ of the Controversy, become much worse ;
 “ for ever since the two Kingdoms were united,
 “ the Presbyterian has been an Established and
 “ National Religion in *Great-Britain*, in the
 “ same sense in which the Episcopal one is so ;
 “ nay, in some sense it is *more Established* than
 “ the

“ the Episcopal, in as much as the Episcopal
 “ *may be* altered by Parliament, whereas the
 “ Presbyterian in *Scotland cannot*, according
 “ to the Articles of the Union.” And not
 thinking it enough to say that our Establishment
 may be altered, he in other places makes no
 scruple to declare that it *ought* to be altered.
 “ The *Generality of the English Presbyterians*,
 says he, p. 204, “ as far as I can judge, don’t
 “ differ much from them, [the Presbyterians
 who took the Covenant in 1643.] “ wishing
 “ the present *very corrupt* Form of *Prelacy*
 “ *were abolished*, and the true ancient Episco-
 “ pacy were restored.” And unless this and
 some other things be done, he declares against
 any *Union* or Accommodation with the Church
 of *England*. “ Let all our Brethren, says he,
 “ p. 285, through the whole World be judges,
 “ whether we have not good reason *utterly to*
 “ *forsake the Tents of these Men*, and keep at
 “ the *greatest distance* from their Communion.”
 After which he adds in the same page, the fol-
 lowing words; “ We have all along desired
 “ Peace, and will still most cheerfully embrace
 “ it, as soon as the *Unrighteous Conditions*
 “ which

" which now obstruct it are removed. But if
 " no alteration can be made in the Terms,
 " *there is an end of all hope of * Peace and*
 " *Concord.*"

MR. *Pierce* here declares that the notions of the Presbyterians now, are the *same* with those of their Predecessors in 1643: and indeed, if we were not sufficiently informed of it, by one who was so well acquainted with the general Sentiments of their Party, we might have reason to think so, from observing what pains have been lately taken by several of our chief Dissenters, to write the Lives, and celebrate the Memories of some of the most *noted Men* in those Times. Dr. *Calamy* has done this remarkably, in his Abridgment of the Life of Mr. *Baxter*, and in others of his Works, in which he extols not only Mr. *Baxter*, but many more of the

* This free Declaration of our Author puts me in mind of what was said by the excellent *Grotius*, about Mr. *Calvin* the great Founder of the Presbyterian Sect. "*Eum si sequimur, nulla Pax erit nisi omnes in Gene-*
vensum Dogmata, Ritus, & Rigorem transeant." Rivet. Apol. Discuss. inter Grot. Oper. Tom. iv. p. 739. If we follow *Calvin*, *there will be no Peace*, unless all go over to the Doctrines, the Rites, and the Stiffness of the People of *Geneva*.

Non-conformists, as so venerable for their Piety and other good qualities, that they were *Men* * of whom the World was not worthy. The like encomiums have been made upon Dr. *Manton*, who preached at *Cromwell's* Inauguration, and † recommended his Highness to the Blessing of God; upon Dr. *Owen*, who was a particular Favourite of the Protector's; and upon divers other Worthies of that age. And lately Mr. *Neal* has published a Work to vindicate and adorn the Characters of those more antient Puritans, who made the first Disturbances in the Church in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, and of those who continued them down from that time to the great Rebellion ‖.

Now

* *Calamy's Def. of Mod. Non-conformity*, Part II. Lond. 1704. Preface, p. 11.

† *Whitlock's Mem.* p. 661.

‖ In the 3d Vol. of this History, which is carried on to the death of King *Charles I.* the Author hath not scrupled to say that the *Royal Army* was little better than a *Company of Banditti or Publick Robbers*. Perhaps, for want of Pay, which that unfortunate Prince was not able to give them, his Troops might be sometimes put upon Acts of Violence, in order to subsist themselves. But even admitting this, surely such Titles were not fit to be given to an Army Commissioned by their King, and in which most of the Chief Families of *England* had some Relations in Service.

Now what can with reason be concluded from all these proceedings, but that the Dissenters of the present age, have much the same Principles, and Dispositions towards the Church, with those their so greatly admired Predecessors; and would in a proper conjuncture of affairs, be likely to take the same measures against her? The only material and avowed change of Principles that I can find to have been among them, seems to be with regard to the *Toleration* of those whom they think to be erroneous in Religion: In that point, indeed, they no longer adhere to the rigid notions of the ancient Sectaries. They have made some publick and full declarations for general Liberty of Judgment and Profession, for mutual Forbearance and Christian Benevolence. But are these Declarations to be understood as importing *Security* to the Church of *England* in her present State, supposing that they had *Power* sufficient to alter it? Not at all. Mr. *Pierce* * in his Answer to Dean *Sherlock*, no longer ago than the year 1718,

* Some Reflections upon Dean *Sherlock's* *Vindication of the Corporation and Test-Acts*, by *James Pierce*, Lond. 1718. p. 29.

1718, very frankly acquaints us, that if we think so, we are much mistaken. The Dean, says he, asks, "*Have any of the Dissenters declared that they are for maintaining the Church as by Law Establish'd?*" To which he answers, "*It would be very strange if they should. Can they dislike so many things as they do in the Church, and yet be against altering them?*" From whence it is plain, that before this Gentleman, and those of his mind, would be content that our Establishment should be maintained, there are MANY THINGS TO BE ALTERED in it.

AND much to the like purpose, we have yet more lately the sentiments of another Writer on the same side*; who, after he has observed, in decent expressions, "*That the Church of England hath already devoured many a rich morsel; that surely it must be an unconscionable stomach that can be contented with nothing less than the whole; and that this may occasion a dangerous surfeit;*" proceeds to assure

* *The Dispute Better adjusted, about the proper Time of applying for a Repeal of the Corporation and Test-Acts.* London 1732, p. 17, 18.

“ us, That the Dissenters are absolutely con-
 “ tent, *TILL her arms are opened a little wider,*
 “ to leave her in possession of every Emolu-
 “ ment belonging to her as Mother Church.”

It is certainly kind in the Dissenters to leave the Church, *for any time at all*, in quiet possession of what she has. But *how much wider* must her arms be opened in order to receive them?

The measure of latitude necessary to this end, is not quite proper to be mentioned at present.

The only farther Explanation he gives of this point, is in *p. 30.* where having told us, “ that

“ the Body of the Dissenters are friends to an

“ Establishment, and would be so even to our

“ Establishment, provided our Foundations

“ were a little larger, and *some proper altera-*

“ *tions were made,*” he adds, for our comfort,

“ that these alterations would not in the least

“ lessen the Honour or Revenues of the Church,

“ or render the Establishment of it in the least

“ more precarious or feeble.” From whence

we may collect, that the *Temporalities* of the

Church *being to remain as they are*, her Doc-

trine, or her Polity, or both, are to be affected

by these alterations. Probably her Articles must

be

be reformed, and her methods of Ordination, Institution, and Jurisdiction must be changed, to satisfy this Author and his Adherents. But has he the Consciences of the Dissenters at his disposal? does he know that all, or a majority, or any considerable part of them, will be satisfied with his Scheme of Alterations? Have the Deputies from their several Meetings entirely agreed among themselves what Alterations they would have? I hardly believe they have gone so far yet, or will do it very soon. But suppose this was done: are the Governors and Members of the Church of *England* to have no satisfaction given to them that these Alterations are *right* to be made? Might not some of them be repugnant or disparaging to Doctrines which They esteem very important Truths? Might not others break in upon Antient Constitutions, which They think of Apostolical, or Divine Authority, and therefore not to be given up to any Demands? I believe there would be at least as many in this Church, and among them persons of eminent character for Piety and Learning, who would take offence at such alterations, as there would be of the Dissenters well sa-

tified with them. And what then would the Church be really the better for opening her arms to receive these new Friends? or how would their Admission conduce to the maintenance of Harmony and Peace among her Members? One effect of it indeed would be, that a number of persons of this Author's Principles might get into the Establishment, and partake of those Honours and Revenues for which they express so kind a concern. But would the Establishment be ever the firmer, or ever the more useful to the State on this account? Let any one consider what was the case of the Church Established in 1641, when so many persons *disaffected to her Polity*, were within her arms? Did they not make use of their Situation to distress their Equals, and pull down their Superiors? did they not presume to disturb and new-model the whole Constitution of the Church? and did not their Attempts and Success in this way produce a deplorable State of Confusion? I shall hereafter have occasion to mention somewhat of this kind: In the mean time, I think, that from what has been said, and the passages cited from Dissenting Writers of *late*, as well as

of former times; we may justly conclude, that they are not disposed to suffer the Establishment of our Church *to continue as it is*; but would, if they had power, forthwith make a *Number of such alterations as they think proper*. Which is in effect, the same as to say, that indeed they desire there should be an Establishment with honours and revenues; but that these should be annexed to *such Doctrines, and such a Polity only as they approve*: And until this be done, they will never be quiet, but will always be endeavouring to bring it to pass.

WE might indeed, as I observed above, have had some reason to conclude this, if we only considered the general Inclinations of Mankind, to promote and propagate their own opinions in Religion, and to obtain as great a share as they can of Secular Advantages along with them: But when to this ground of Judgment, is added the *Experience* we have had, in such a course of years, of the Spirit and Temper of the Dissenters towards the Church; and moreover, the *Signs* they give even now, of the *Continuance of the same Dispositions*, by celebrating the memories of their Predecessors in the Separation, and

and avowing most of their Tenets; we have, I think, in these circumstances, as much evidence as can well be expected in a matter of this nature, and such as may justify our acting, as there may be occasion, upon it. This then is the first thing I proposed to shew, to wit, That the Body of the Dissenters would *desire the Subversion of the present Establishment of the Church of England, if they had Power to effect it.*

THE second thing I advance, is, That by a Capacity of Publick Offices *without any Restraint*, the Dissenters in a short time would come to have *so much Power* as would be sufficient at least to *Endanger* this Establishment, if not, in the end, to *effect its Subversion*. And this will be likewise evident, if we consider the *whole Body* of those Dissenters, who, if *any* of them have a right to a Capacity of Offices without a Religious Test, must *all* be allowed to have the *same right*. Those who have been the most forward of late to put in their claim to this right, are the Presbyterians, Independants, and Anabaptists: But there are many others who may, *with as much reason as these,*
expect

expect to be considered and treated as good Subjects of the State.

IN the first place, this may truly be affirmed of the *Quakers*. They have, for many years past, not only practised a quiet Submission to the Civil Government, but have professed a true Loyalty and Affection to it. And there is the more reason to give credit to them in this point, because their Interest is productive of these dispositions; and because the Genius and Manners of their Sect, averse to every thing of Military Practice, do, in some measure, disable them to be dangerous, by open disturbance, to the publick Peace. This Body of Men, therefore, has a right, as good Subjects, to all the same Privileges as other Protestant Dissenters; and particularly to a like *unrestrained Capacity* of Offices in the State.

ANOTHER considerable Set of Protestants who differ from the Church of *England*, are the Arians, Socinians, and others, by whatever name they be called, who are Heterodox with regard to the Sacred TRINITY. The number of these is not a little increased of late years. Men are pleased to have all points of Religion brought

brought within the compass of their Reason, and cannot easily digest those acknowledgments, which in the Orthodox Scheme are necessary to be made, of the weakness and defectiveness of human Understanding: On which account 'tis not very improbable, but these Anti-trinitarians may in length of time gain *numerous* Converts; and when they have done so, may resume the design they have formerly had, of holding separate Assemblies for Divine Worship; that they may not be obliged to join in Forms which they think dishonourable to the *One* Supreme GOD. But whatever the increase of their numbers may be, there is reason to think that they will be as quiet and well-affected Subjects to the Civil Government, as the other Protestant Dissenters are. For none of their Tenets are of such a nature as will incline them to dispute the Rightfulness of the present Civil Settlement, or put them upon any attempts to disturb it. A Man who believes that the Eternal Father of all things cannot have any Equal, and that therefore the word GOD is applied to the Son in a lower sense, may, notwithstanding this opinion, preserve a due Loyalty to the KING, and Affection to

to his Country: He may have charity for his neighbours, and be disposed to live in peace with them; in a word, he may perform all the Social Duties, as well as another Man who is *Right* in his Belief. Mr. *Neal* has declared himself as to this matter in very full terms.

“ An *Heretick*, says he, or a Non-conformist
 “ to the Established Religion, may be a most
 “ loyal and dutiful Subject, and *deserve* the
 “ *Highest Preferment* his Prince can bestow*.”

I cannot go so far as this Author in his compliment to Hereticks; but I think it indeed evident that they may be as peaceable and even loyal Subjects to a Civil Government, as the Presbyterians, or other Protestant Dissenters: And therefore upon the General Principle which these latter make the ground of their Claim, the Anti-trinitarians, even tho' they should openly profess themselves such, and separate from the Church, yet ought to have an equally free Capacity of Offices in the State. The Reader will see that what hath been said concerning *These*, is to be applied to *all* sorts of *Christians*,

* *Hist. of the Puritans*, vol. 3. p. 312.

however erroneous they are in Religion, provided they be well-affected to the State. And, perhaps, he may think that *Others* besides *Christians*, have also a right to be included in this Application; in regard that it is both possible and likely that they may be good Subjects to the *Civil* Government. Mr. *Chandler* has declar'd *, " He does not apprehend that
 " the profession of *any* particular Religion, as
 " it stands contradistinguished from the Law of
 " Nature, is, in the nature of things, *necessary*
 " to the Safety and good Order of Government,
 " which may be supported by a due regard to
 " the practice of the *moral Duties*, and by a
 " proper care in the Civil Magistrate to enforce
 " the Observation of them, in all who are sub-
 " ject to their Authority and Government;
 " which will be sufficiently supported by such
 " a regard to moral Duties notwithstanding the
 " greatest Diversity of Opinions in other things,
 " even though the Community should consist
 " of *some Deists*, *some Mahometans*, and *some*

* *Reflections on the Conduct of Modern Deists, &c.*
 London 1727. Preface, P. 5.

"*Christians.*." In this passage, if I understand it rightly, the Author's Meaning seems to be, that as persons of the Religions here mentioned acknowledge the Being and Providence of God, with the moral obligations from thence incumbent upon mankind, they may, by the influence of these principles upon them, be *Loyal* Subjects under *any* Government that is rightly administred. Now if this be true, then in pursuance of the general principle laid down by the Dissenters, in behalf of *all* Subjects well affected to the *Civil* Government, it must follow, that Free-born *Englishmen*, although they should openly profess themselves *Deists*, yet ought not to have their Civil Rights at all abridged on that account, by any Test, or other means, but ought to be allowed to be as freely capable as Christian Subjects, of Offices in the State. Which Doctrine, if it be good, will probably encourage a number of Persons to offer their Service to the Publick, who cannot *conscientiously* do it at present.

BUT supposing this Capacity of Offices should be *restrained* to *Christians only*, yet if we con-

sider how numerous *all* the Sectaries or Hereticks
 professing this Religion, are at present, or may
 be hereafter, they will appear to be a Body justly
 formidable to the Church of *England*. For
 though they differ among themselves in many
 respects, and might be ill enough inclined to
 each other, in case they were *Competitors* for
any Advantage, yet while there is nothing
 of that sort to set them at variance, they will
 probably *agree* in being *Enemies* to the Esta-
 blishment of the Church, and in endeavouring
 to weaken and subvert it: because in its Sub-
 version, they may all hope to find their seve-
 ral Advantages, in one way or another. If
 they cannot all expect to gain *such an Establi-
 shment* for themselves as the *Church* has at present,
 yet they may all hope to have some Allowances
 from the State for their several Teachers, ac-
 cording to a Scheme that is said to be formed
 by some of their Friends: Or if this point should
 prove too hard to be gained, they may, at least,
 hope to be *relieved from that unjust Burthen*,
 as the *Quakers* and many others account it, of
paying to an *Established Ministry*, and may rea-
 sonably expect to *increase* very much their several
Sects,

Sects, when there shall not be a regular Body to oppose them. These, and other Motives of the like nature, did, in fact, engage the different Sectaries in 1641, to act in close Concert and Union together for demolishing the Church of *England*. Not only the *Presbyterians*, who hoped to be *Established* in the room of the Church, but the *Independants* and the *Anabaptists*, the Enthusiasts who were for *the Fifth Monarchy*, and others of that turn, who knew not what they were for, yet all heartily agreed “ in declaring, before God, with up-lifted hands, “ that they would *Extirpate* the Episcopal Government by Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, “ and Chapters, and all the Officers dependant “ upon them;” which accordingly, by their joint assistance was brought to pass.

THEN indeed, after a little time, these Sects began to quarrel among themselves; and the *Presbyterians*, who came nearest to obtain an Establishment, most bitterly reproached the *Independants*, the *Anabaptists*, and other Sectaries, with their Schism, their ill Principles, and their Hypocrisy, as what produced insupportable Disorders. Mr. *Edwards*, an eminent Presbyterian,

byterian, made and published a Collection of Examples to this purpose, and added his own Censure of the persons concerned, in the following terms: "There never was a more Hypocritical, False, Dissembling, Cunning Generation in *England*, than many of the Grantees of our Sectaries.——They encourage, protect, and cry up for *Saints*, Sons of *Be-lial*, and the vilest of Men." Edwards's *Gangrena*, part 3, p. 240*. And again, p. 87. "Yea, says he, when for their Seditious, Tumultuous, Libellous, Scoffing, Wicked, Lying, Scandalous Reports, Books, and Practices, they have been questioned, there is no thing in their mouths but Persecution." Mr. Neal has thought fit in his third Vol. of the *History of Puritans*, p. 370, to speak slightly of this author, "and of our Church-Writers, for reporting the State of Religion in those Times from his Writings." Let us then have recourse to the noted Mr. Baxter, whom Mr. Neal often quotes, and with great approbation.

Did

* London 1646.

byterian,

“ Did we ever think, says Mr. *Baxter* *, when
 “ we were reproached by the enemies, as ha-
 “ ving our Party composed of Anabaptists, and
 “ Separatists, that so many of them would have
 “ proved so much worse? ——— Is it this that
 “ our eyes must behold instead of our so much
 “ desired and hoped for Reformation? Oh what
 “ heart is so hard in any true Christian’s breast,
 “ that doth not rend and relent to think of the
 “ doleful case of *England* ! How many thou-
 “ sand Professors of Religion are quite ruined
 “ in their Souls, and turned into *Monsters*, ra-
 “ ther than Saints !” And in the same Book,
 p. 147. “ What shall I tell you, says he, of all
 “ those hideous Pamphlets against Ordinances,
 “ and for the Mortality of the Soul, and that
 “ the Soul is God himself, and against the
 “ Truth of the Scripture, and downright Fa-
 “ milism, and Libertinism, and Paganism! —
 “ I cannot but think how Men cried out a-
 “ gainst Mr. *Edwards* his *Gangræna* at first, as
 “ if he had spoken nothing but Lyes, and now
 “ they have justified it with a fearful Over-
 “ plus.”

† In his *Plain Scripture-Proof of Infants Church-*
Membership, &c. p. 149. 4to, London 1656.

“*plus.*” Such was the Language of the Presbyterians concerning the Sectaries of those times. ON the other hand, *They* were not wanting to reproach the Presbyterians with equal Bitterness. The Independants say, “The *National Covenant* is a double-faced Covenant, the “greatest Makebate and Snare, that ever the “*Devil*, and the *Clergy his Agents*, cast in “among honest men in our age.” Edwards’s *Gangr.* part 3. p. 220. “The *Presbyterian Government* is Anti-christian, Tyrannical, “Lordly, Cruel, a worse Bondage than under “Prelates, a Bondage under Task-masters, as “the *Israelites* in *Egypt.*” *Gangr.* part 3. p. 221. “The *Assembly* is Anti-christian, Romish, Bloody, the Plagues and Pests of the “Kingdom.” *Gangr.* part 3. p. 230. After so much Discord, one would have hardly thought it possible for them to have united any more: but upon the Restoration, all these Differences were soon forgotten, and they acted amicably in Concert again, to carry on their Work of opposing the Church of *England*: They do so at present, and while they have such an Adversary before them, it is probable they always will.

AND

AND these their united efforts against the Church, will be likely to have the greater Success, in regard that the Dissenters may gain such an Interest in the Corporate and other Burghs, which send Members to the Parliament, as may give them a weight in the Legislature, much more than in strict proportion to their Numbers and their Wealth. Both these indeed, according to their own accounts, are very considerable. A late Writer * on their side says, "The Number of the Protestant Dissenters, (by whom he seems to mean only the Dissenters of the three denominations) " is at the lowest calculation much above 700,000, and their Wealth " in Land, &c. amounts to near Fifteen Millions." Ifancy this person used *Multiplying Glasses* in his computation of their Strength: But whatever it be, it is undoubtedly a circumstance of great advantage, towards the exerting it with effect, which another of their Writers has observed, and I believe with truth, to wit †, " That the " Dissenters being for the most part engaged

* *Answer to the Dispute adjusted*, p. 19. Lond. 1732.

† *Inquiry into the Propriety of applying to Parliament*, p. 7. Lond. 1732.

“ in the *Trade* of the Kingdom, both as Mer-
 “ chants and Manufacturers, must necessarily
 “ create a great dependance upon them.” The
 same quantity of Wealth engaged in *Trade*, is,
 without all question, *much more powerful* than
 when vested in *Land*; both because of the more
 frequent returns of it into the hands of the Pro-
 prietors, and of the many opportunities it af-
 fords of setting People to work, assisting lower
 Tradesmen with Goods upon Credit, and taking
 off their Manufactures. On these accounts the
 Dissenters have certainly a great advantage to-
 wards forming an Interest in the Burroughs, of
 which many consist chiefly of Men in Business,
 who may be easily laid under Obligations by
 the means I have mentioned. To trade mostly
 with them, as the Dissenters are known to do
 one with another, and to give them Credit a
 good while in their dealings, may sometimes be
 equivalent to no small sum of ready Money,
 and yet may be done with ease by those who
 have large Sums always passing through their
 hands. They may therefore gain a number of
 Persons in the Magistracy or Government of
 Corporations, and by degrees may introduce
 their

their own friends into those Posts. And it is well known, that by being in the Government of Corporations, by having the Disposal of their Revenues, which in some of them are very considerable, by conferring their Offices of Trust and Profit, with their other Franchises and Privileges, a *very great Interest* may be formed towards getting Members into *Parliament*. This Interest may be of no small weight, even in Elections for some of the Counties; but in many Burroughs, it is so powerful, that hardly any other natural Interest of *Country Gentlemen* can pretend to equal it.

INDEED, it is well known how much the Interest which the Gentry had in the Burroughs has been diminished within forty years past. By their having been under the constant burden of a heavy Land-Tax all the last War, their Estates are greatly impaired and encumbered; so that they have not been able to spend so much Money as has been necessary for Elections against those, who paying little or nothing to the Publick, and getting vast Estates by the Funds, or by Trade, have been in a condition to bear what Expences they pleased, in order to be in Parlia-
ment.

ment. But the case will be still worse, if the Dissenters shall be able to bring themselves into the Government of Corporations, and thereby turn all the Power they derive from thence likewise against the Gentry. In that case, how difficult will it be for the latter to procure themselves Seats in the House of Commons? And unless they do this, how hard will it be for them to succeed in their pretensions to any Places of Honour and Profit? I believe, indeed, that the Crown, and those of it's Ministers who understand it's true Interest, will always be disposed, if other things are equal, to favour the Gentlemen of *Ancient Families*, whose brave Ancestors have preserved the Constitution. It is very hard they should, as in a course of years too many of them probably will, sink down into the dust, by the continual Disadvantages under which they labour. To suffer this, as far as it can be hindered, would be wrong in Policy, because the Heads and other Branches of Ancient Families, will have Spirits agreeable to their Generous Blood, and if they be under perpetual Pressures, the Publick at length must be very much incommoded by it. Whereas, if They be put
into

into Offices of Trust and Profit, they may from thence not only be made easier in their Fortunes, but may most effectually serve the Government, by the Credit which an ancient and noble Family reflects upon the Post it fills. And they are in *Number* much more than enow to afford a very copious choice of persons to serve the Publick in those Posts that are *fit* for *them*. As on the other hand, for those Places that are most proper for persons in the way of Trade and Business, there are also great numbers of reputable Merchants, and others, of the Church of *England*, entirely well-affected to the present Settlement, out of whom the Crown may be abundantly supplied with proper Officers. I believe the Ministers of State, by the numerous applications made to them on such accounts, know this to be true: which, by the way, proves that there is *no want* of the *Dissenters*, nor any expediency of employing them on that account.

BUT whether it be *expedient* to employ them, or not, will any one who knows the present state of things, imagine that they will not *get into Places*, if by the means above mentioned, they

they can get themselves *into Parliament*. Let us only suppose a good number of them in the House of Commons, and that they prove active, constantly attendant, well united, able Speakers, and not uneasy in their private Fortunes. What will they not think they have a right to claim? what may they not combine to gain? what may they not succeed in? Some persons who have been for the abolition of the Test, have *professed* to think that it could have no other effect than to occasion the admission of the Dissenters into Offices of the *Inferior kind*. I suppose they meant such Offices as a Writer for the Dissenters* specifies, in saying that “ They are as *willing* and *able* as any, to “ serve in the Commissions of Taxes, Peace, “ and Lieutenancy, in the Bench of Aldermen “ and Assistants.” But this same Writer is by no means contented with Posts of this kind. He puts in his Claim to a Share of all, even the Highest in the Kingdom: for he adds†, “ That “ they are are *as willing* to serve in the Judi- “ cature,

* *An Essay upon the Interest of England, in respect to Protestants dissenting from the Established Church.* Lond. 1701, p. 19.

† P. 21.

“ cature, and Offices of State, or in Commands
 “ at Sea or Land.” And soon after, he intimates “ that it would not be to the dishonour
 “ of the Government, to have a *Dissenting*
 “ *General, or a Dissenting Statesman :*” as to
 which, I doubt not but most of his Friends
 are of his opinion. And will it be impossible
 they should gain *such Posts ?* Have we
 not had Examples in our History, of Men of
 Interest in Parliament, who have raised them-
 selves into Offices of that kind, without any
 real Favour from the Crown ? Was not this the
 case of * *Mr. St. John*, of *Lord Say*, and of
 others in the Reign of *Charles* the First ? was
 it not the case of the † *Earl of Shaftesbury* in
 the Reign of *Charles* the Second ? and has it not
 been the case of many others since those times ?
 And whenever the Dissenters should obtain any
 of the *Chief Posts*, would not the Interest and
 Strength of their Party be proportionably in-
 creased ? would not they be preferred to all the
 under-Places of Trust, Profit, or Influence, in
 the disposal of their Principals ? would they not

* Clarendon's *History*, vol. 1. 8vo, p. 211.

† Temple's *Mem.* part 3.

act with so much more Dignity and Weight? would not the Members, and especially the Ministers, of the Established Church, be proportionably discountenanced and discouraged? and must not these circumstances undermine and cut away the ground of our Church-Establishment?

It has been represented as absurd, to apprehend that the Establishment of the Church of *England*, should ever come to be subverted by the Dissenters; because this must suppose them to gain the whole Legislature, the King, and the Lords, as well as the Commons. But the Reader will hardly fail to reflect, that the very same thing which is now talked of, as *so impracticable*, has been *actually done* in this Kingdom, not a hundred years ago; and done by the Power of those Dissenters, who a short time before, had *as little appearance* of being able to prevail upon the whole Legislature, as their Successors have at present. The circumstances now in favour of the latter, are not indeed quite the same as they were then; but they are of great weight: and I believe it will be allowed that the House of Commons at present, is not

of

of less moment in the Balance of the Constitution, than it was at that time; nor are critical Conjunctions in our national affairs, less likely to happen, when there is a *Pretender* to the Throne of these Kingdoms; when *France* is much more formidable to Us than it was at that time, and when, if but *Two* Lives should chance to fall, That Crown would arrive to a degree of Power, which hardly any thing in *Europe* would be capable of resisting. But even without taking this last case into our view, let any man of judgment but think on the posture our affairs may possibly be in, both abroad and at home, in the course of events for thirty or forty years to come. Let him suppose that upon the Repeal of the Corporation and Test-Acts, the Dissenters should gain either a Majority, or even a Party of considerable weight in the House of Commons; and when we consider the Gentlemen of *North-Britain*, this will not appear to be very unlikely: let him suppose that the concurrence of this Party may be necessary to grant Supplies, when they are more than ordinarily wanted, in times of any publick hazard or distress; that divers of those Members who are for

the

the Church of *England*, may be unattentive or disunited, while the Dissenting Party is vigilant, active, and resolute in pushing any points to the disadvantage of the Church. These were really the circumstances in 1641* ; they may possibly, and even not improbably, upon the Repeal of the Corporation and Test-Acts, be the same again : and supposing they should be, will any one say that the Church Established would be *in no danger* ? I will leave this point, without farther enlargement, to the impartial Reader, who, I doubt not, must clearly see, that in such circumstances, the Establishment of the Church would be made to shake to it's very foundations ; And without such extraordinary aid and support, from the Crown, or the House of Peers, as perhaps it will be difficult for either of them to give, must be borne upon, sink, and at length be overthrown.

Now would such a state of things be for the true Interest of the Nation ? would it be desirable

* In King *Charles* the First's time, Lord *Falkland* was wont to say, that *They who hated the Bishops, hated them worse than the Devil ; and that they who loved them, did not love them so well as their Dinner.* Clarend. Hist. vo, book 3, p. 276.

able either to have *no Establishment*, or one of a Presbyterian or Independant Form? A late Writer*, who stiled himself a Member of the House of Commons, has let us know it is his opinion, that from Nature, or the Reason of things, it is difficult to shew that the Clergy have any right to be maintained by the Laity; or at least, he thinks it wrong† *that any one should be obliged to support a Parochial Pastor, whom he never resorts to*; which opinion visibly allows no right in the Magistrate to provide, at the *general Charge of his Subjects*, for their general Instruction, by persons *whom he appoints*; or in other words, represents it as *unjust* to make a *Publick Establishment of any Religion*. But this Gentleman has the misfortune to differ from the wisest and best men in every age and country of the world, of whose sentiments and practice we have any account. By seriously considering the general state and dispositions of Mankind, they found a necessity of having a competent number of persons, in every nation,

* *Animadversions on a reverend Prelate's Remarks on the Tythe-Bill.* Lond. 1731. p. 12, 13, 14.

† Page 14.

peculiarly appointed for the study and administrations of Religion ; that so they might be fit to inculcate it on others, and preserve an influence on the minds of the People, that might answer the ends of Civil Government. One might easily shew with what care and regard such institutions were made, and kept up, in all the most celebrated Nations of Antiquity ; and how much they contributed to the Publick Welfare. But I will not spend time in doing this ; because the Expediency, and even Necessity of such Establishments of Religion, is a thing so evident in itself, to those who know Mankind, that it has been confessed by several Politicians, who were certainly not prejudiced in favour of the Clergy of our own, or of any other Country. Mr. Harrington *, Mr. Nevil †, and even || Oliver Cromwell, declared their opinions, that there ought to be in every State, *a National Church*, or a *Publick Leading in Religion*.

AND

* See *a Letter of Enthusiasm. Characteristics*, vol. i. p. 17.

† Plato Redivivus, &c. Lond. 1681, p. 184.

|| Burnet's *Hist. of his own Times*, vol. i. p. 64.

AND if there must be *some Establishment* of Religion, it is as certain that one in the *Episcopal way*, is both more agreeable to the *Practice* of the *Primitive Christian Church*, and more suitable to the *Civil Constitution* of *this Realm*, than any *Presbyterian Model* could be.

OF the *former* of these points one may be easily satisfied, by consulting the Writings of the Fathers, and others, in the three first Centuries after our Saviour. In some of these, written soon after the beginning of the second age, and in others that followed them all along downwards, there are passages very express to shew that *They believed* the Order of Bishops, as superior to that of Presbyters, to have been instituted by the Apostles themselves, and that accordingly, they *laid a great stress upon it*. The Epistles of St. Ignatius in particular, have been often quoted to this purpose, and proved to be genuine, with a force of evidence which our Dissenters are unwilling to admit, but unable to contest with any shew of reason. These Gentlemen indeed have affected to *slight* the *Authority of the Fathers*, in this point and
 2 others,

others. One of their Chiefs *, not very long ago, went so far as to say, that “ WE are *pro-*
“ *perly* the *Fathers*, who stand on their shoul-
“ ders, and have the advantage of seeing far-
“ ther in several respects than they did.” But
men of judgment and impartiality, will hardly
allow that Dr. *Manton*, and his friends the
Dissenting Divines, do *quite* so well deserve the
Title of *Fathers*, as those Venerable Persons in
Antiquity, of whom, some were acquainted
with the Apostles themselves, others lived in
the age immediately following, all passed their
lives in great dangers or hardships for the sake
of their Religion, and several attested it's Truth
with their Blood. It is not conceivable that in
a matter of fact, so plain and publick in it's
nature, and which so many persons might be
interested to examine, as that of Church-Gov-
ernment, the immediate, or very near Succes-
sors of the Apostles, should be so deceived, as not
to know whether Episcopacy was of Apostolical
Institution, and of great importance to be retained
in the Church, or not. And if they could not
but

* *Memoirs of Dr. Manton*, by William Harris. Lond.
1725. p. 68.

but be sufficiently *informed* in this point, it is yet less conceivable that those, who laid down their Lives for the Christian Cause, should be willing *to impose* upon Posterity in a matter so important, in which if they did not say the Truth, so many persons living when their works were published, must have been able to contradict them. Had we no other grounds but these, for our adherence to Episcopacy as of Apostolical Institution, they would be sufficient.

BUT even from the Holy Scriptures themselves, there are no small proofs to be drawn for this same point. In the Epistles of St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*, Directions are given them with reference to their Ordaining persons for the service of the Church, and correcting them by Admonition or other Censures, as occasions might require. From the nature of which Powers we may plainly see, that the persons who were invested with them, were not upon the foot of *Common Presbyters*, and much less upon that of *our Church-wardens and Vestrymen*, as the author of the * *Independent Whig* has,

* Numb. L. vol. 2. p. 426. " In the Epistle to *Titus*,
" who it seems was another Bishop, he is directed to set
in

has, with scorn, represented *Titus* to have been; but that they were of an Order, to which those who were under their Jurisdiction could not *then* pretend to be, though otherwise they were commissioned to the general Administrations of the Gospel. The Dissenters alledge, that the Title of *Bishop* is applied in the Scripture to such persons as we call mere Presbyters now: and we grant that *that* word was then used in a larger sense than it is at present. But ought any one to conclude that therefore all those persons to whom *that* word was applied, must needs have been *equal* in every respect? The same word *Baron* is now applied to Burgessees of

“ in order the things that were wanting; (the Business among Us, of Church-Wardens and Vestry-men.)”

After shewing this Contempt of a Person ordained to the Highest standing Office in the Church by the Apostles themselves, it is no wonder that the same Author gives such usage as he does to the *Modern Clergy*.

But in another place, indeed, he makes no scruple of treating the Generality of Mankind with as much disrespect as he does the Clergy. Vol. I. p. 155. he says, “ that by conversing with Mankind, he had found that they generally consist of two sorts, *Learned Parrots*, and *Unlearned Parrots*; to the first whereof, *Absurdity* is the peculiar Privilege; and to the latter, *Ignorance*.” Such a mixture of Humility and Good-manners is not easily to be matched.

of the Cinque-Ports, to Judges in the Exchequer, and to Peers of the Realm; and must we therefore conclude that these are all equal in rank and dignity? If not, why should we think that all persons to whom the word *Bishop* is applied in Scripture, must have been so equal? And yet this is the main argument alledged by the Dissenters for it; when on the other hand there are visible marks of a Superiority of Order and Power, both in *Timothy*, and *Titus*, and the *Angels of the Churches* in the *Revelation**, over all the Members of their respective Churches.

It is a vain evasion which is used by the Dissenters, in saying that *Timothy*, *Titus*, and others, were Church-Officers of an *extraordinary kind*, which was not designed to be continued in the Church: for of this, no proof can be drawn from the Holy Scriptures; and on the contrary, we find that the ancient Writers speak of them as of *Bishops* of the *like Order and Power* with *those who succeeded them* in the same Sees; and *They* were evidently of the *same Kind* with the *Bishops* in the *other parts* of the *Church*, who were *then* univer-

* Rev. Chap. ii. and iii.

fally allowed to be superior to Presbyters ; and of whom, in that Quality, says *Grotius* *, “ we have Catalogues in *Irenæus*, *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, *Theodoret*, and others. Now not to give credit to such great Authors, in a matter of history, one must have an irreverent and obstinate mind.” Accordingly, that very excellent person, whose candour and judgment were equal to his learning, would have persuaded the Remonstrants in *Holland*, about the year 1645 †, “ to appoint some Bishops among them, and that these should receive the laying on of hands from the *Irish* Archbishop,

* *De Imperio Summarum Potestatum circa Sacra. Oper. tom. 4. p. 272.* “ *Aërii sanè hic error ab Omni Ecclesiâ damnatus est, quod diceret Presbyterum ab Episcopo nulla differentia discerni debere. Ipse Hieronymus ei qui scripserat, nihil interest inter Episcopum & Presbyterum, respondit, hoc satis imperite; In portu, ut dicitur, naufragium.——Tertium hoc sit, Episcopatum initium habuisse Apostolicis temporibus. Testatur hoc Catalogi Episcoporum, apud Irenæum, Eusebium, Socratem, Theodoretum, atque alios, qui omnes incipiunt ab Apostolica Ætate. Tantis autem Autoribus fidem derogare, in Re Historica, non est nisi irreverentis & pertinacis Animi.*”

† See the Testimonies concerning *Hugo Grotius* in *Le Clerc's* Edition of *Grotius on the Christian Religion*, translated by *Dr. John Clarke*, p. 331.

“ bishop, who was there at that time, and that
 “ when they were so ordained, they should af-
 “ terwards ordain other Pastors.” From whence
 it appears, what the sentiments * of *Grotius*
 were, about the *Expediency* at least, of having
 in that Church a Regular Successive Ordination,
 through the hands of Bishops.

THE like or greater concern about It, we
 find in those pious Confessors of Christ, the

* Mr. *Samuel Chandler*, in his second Treatise on the
Notes of the Church, p. 38. has been pleased to affirm,
 that “ the Mission of Bishops and Prelates is in itself a
 “ *Trifling Circumstance, of little or no importance.*” But
 one might shew that the ancient Writers of the Church,
 whose Judgment in this point may surely weigh against
 Mr. *Chandler's*, express themselves very differently about
 it. I beg leave to recommend to this Gentleman's con-
 sideration the following passage of *Saint Cyprian*, whose
 Abilities no one ever questioned, and whose Integrity was
 approved by his laying down his Life for the sake of the
 Gospel.—Having observed in his 33d Epistle, (*Edit. Oxon.*)
 that our blessed Saviour in making the Settlement of his
 Church, said to *Peter*,—*Upon this Rock I will build my*
Church, &c. he goes on thus, “ *Inde per Temporum &*
Successionum Vices, Episcoporum Ordinatio & Eccle-
sia Ratio decurrit; ut Ecclesia super Episcopos constitu-
atur & omnis Actus Ecclesiae per eisdem Præpositos
gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque Divina Lege fundatum
sit, miror quosdam, Audaci temeritate, sic mihi scri-
bere voluisse.”

Protestants of *Bohemia**; who were apprehensive that Ordinations in which *Presbyters*, and not a *Bishop*, should create another *Presbyter*, would not be lawful, and were in doubt how they should be able to maintain such an Ordination, either to others, when they opposed, or to their own People, when they questioned it; and therefore they sent Deputies to the Remains of the ancient *Waldenses*, upon the Confines of *Moravia* and *Austria*, by whose Bishops these Deputies were consecrated to the Episcopal Office, which they have ever since transmitted to their Successors.

AND if some other Foreign Churches do not go so far as this, but are willing to defend the Validity of their own Presbyterian Ordinations, they however, in doing it, lay no small stress upon *the Necessity* they were under of taking this course, when they first made the Reformation, "I think, says Mr. *Du Bosc* †, an eminent

* *Comenius in Fratr. Bohem. Histor. sect. 59. in Durel of the Government of the Reformed Churches, &c. p. 12, 13.*

† This Translation was made from the *French Original*, by Dr. *Peter du Moulin*, and is to be seen in *Durel's Government of Foreign Churches*, p. 122.

nent Protestant Divine in *France*, in the year
 1660, " That not *any of my brethren will con-*
 " *demn me*, if I say, that well-ordered Episco-
 " pacy hath most important and considerable
 " utilities, which cannot be found in the Pres-
 " byterian Discipline. If we have followed the
 " last, it is not for any aversion we have against
 " the former : ——— But it is because *Necessity*
 " *hath obliged us to it* ; because Reformation
 " having been begun in this Kingdom by the
 " *People*, and by the inferior Church-men, the
 " places of Bishops remained filled with men of
 " a contrary Religion, so that we were con-
 " *strained to content ourselves with Ministers*
 " *and Elders* as well as we could. — If Bishops
 " had embraced the Reformation at first, I make
 " no doubt but that their Order had been main-
 " tained in the Ecclesiastical Polity." Mr. *Le*
Moyne *, another Protestant Divine in *France*,
 says, " Truly, I believe not, that it is possible
 " to keep either *Peace or Order in your Church*,
 " [of *England*] *without preserving the Episcopal*
 " *Dignity*. And I confess, that I conceive not
 " *by*

* Durel of the Government of the Reformed Churches,
 p. 127.

“ by what Spirit they are led, that oppose that
 “ Government, and cry it down with such vio-
 “ lence.” This same person having observed *,
 “ that the Bishops had been concerned in the
 “ Reformation in *England*, and that in our
 “ Churches there were Lectures and Praises of
 “ the *pure Truth*, adds, that This ought to
 “ oblige all good Men *not to separate from it*,
 “ but to look upon *the Church of England as a*
 “ *very orthodox Church*: Thus all the Prote-
 “ stants of *France* do; those at *Geneva*, those of
 “ *Switzerland*, and *Germany*, and those of
 “ *Holland* too; for they did themselves a very
 “ great honour, in having some Divines of *Eng-*
 “ *land* in their Synod of *Dort*, and shewed
 “ plainly that they had a profound veneration
 “ for the Church of *England*. And from
 “ whence does it then come, that some *Eng-*
 “ *lishmen* themselves, have so ill an opinion of
 “ Her at present, and *divide rashly from her, as*
 “ *they do?* Is not this to divide from *all the*
 “ *ancient Churches*, from all the *Churches of*
 “ *the East*, from *all the Protestant Churches*,
 “ which have always had a great respect for the
 “ Purity

* Durel, p. 127.

“ Purity of the Church of *England* * ?” And to the same effect, Mr. *de l’Angle*, another Protestant Divine of Note in *France*, has declared his sentiments †. “ Since the Church of *England*, says he, is a True Church of our Lord, “ since her Worship and Doctrines are *pure*, “ and have nothing in them contrary to the “ Word of God ; and since that when the Re- “ formation was there received, it was received “ together with *Episcopacy*, and with the E- “ stablishment of the Liturgy and Ceremonies “ which are there in use to this day ; it is with- “ out doubt the duty of all the Reformed of “ your Realm, to keep themselves inseparably “ united to the Church. And those that do “ not do this, upon pretence that they should “ desire *more Simplicity in the Ceremonies*, and “ less of *Inequality among the Ministers*, do cer- “ tainly commit a very great Sin : for Schism is “ the most formidable Evil that can befall the “ Church.” The Authorities that have been here alledged, will, I hope, be of weight to-
wards

* In Bishop *Stillingsfleet’s Unreasonableness of Separation*, p. 407.

† In the same Place, p. 421.

wards supporting my assertion, that the Government of a Church in the Episcopal way, is *agreeable to the practice of the Primitive Christians, and to the Institution of the Apostles themselves*, whereas one in the Presbyterian way would not be so: and therefore an Establishment in the former way ought to be preferred.

BUT this is not the only Advantage that our present Establishment has. It is, farther, the *most suitable to the nature of our Civil Constitution*. In this point we have the Judgments of some of the ablest Statesmen that we have ever had in *England*. “ For the Government
“ of Bishops, says the famous Lord Bacon *,
“ for my part, not prejudging the proceedings
“ of other Churches, I do hold it to be *warranted by the Word of God*, and by the *Practice of the ancient Church in better Times*,
“ *and much more convenient for Kingdoms*,
“ *than a Parity of Ministers*, and Government
“ *by Synods*.” And again in the same Tract,
“ It is not possible, says he, in respect of the
“ great

* *Considerations towards the better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England*, in the 4th vol. of his Works, folio, Edit. Lond. 1730, p. 436.

“ great *Sympathy* between the State Civil and
 “ the State Ecclesiastical, to make *so much al-*
 “ *teration* in the Church, but that it would
 “ have a *perillous* operation on the Kingdom.”
 This great Man does not clearly express the
 Reasons why he thought a Presbyterian Govern-
 ment in the Church less convenient and suitable
 to the Civil State than an Episcopal one. But
 Sir *Francis Walsingham* speaks more plainly in
 his noted Letter to Mr. *Critty*. He observes,
 “ that the Puritans, in their Consistory and
 “ Presbytery, opened to the People such a way
 “ to the Government, as was no less prejudicial
 “ to the Liberty of private Persons, than to the
 “ *Sovereignty* of the Prince.”—

AND this was indeed more fully declared as
 the sense of Queen *Elizabeth*, by Sir *John*
Puckering, who was afterwards Lord-Keeper of
 the Great-Seal, in a Speech by him made in
 the House of Peers, in the 28th year of her
 Reign; of which the following passage is a
 part*. “ You are especially commanded by

* See a *Short View of the late Troubles in England,*
in the Reign of King Charles I. Oxford, 1681. Folio.
 p. 13.

" her Majesty, says he, that no ear be given, or
 " time afforded, to the wearisome Sollicitations
 " of those that be called Puritans, wherewith all
 " the late Parliaments have been exceedingly
 " importuned: which sort of persons, while
 " that in the giddiness of their spirits they la-
 " bour and strive to advance a new Eldership,
 " they do but hurt the Repose of the Church
 " and Commonwealth, which is as well ground-
 " ed for the Body of Religion itself, and as well
 " guided for the Discipline, as any Realm that
 " confesseth the Truth. And the same thing
 " is made good to the world by many of the
 " Writings of godly and learned Men, neither
 " answered nor answerable by these new-fangled
 " Refiners. These Men do both teach and
 " publish in their printed Books, and teach in
 " their Conventicles sundry Opinions, not only
 " dangerous to a well-settled Estate, and the
 " Policy of the Realm, by putting a pike be-
 " tween the Clergy and the Laity, but also
 " much derogatory to her sacred Majesty and
 " her Crown; as well by the diminution of her
 " ancient and lawful Revenues, as by denying
 " her Highness's Prerogative and Supremacy,
 " and

and by offering Peril to her Majesty's Safety
 "in her own Kingdoms." We see here what
 were the sentiments of that wise Queen and her
 Council, who will be allowed, I think, to have
 understood at least the *Civil* Interests of this
 Kingdom.

And much to the same purpose we have
 the Judgments of several *Foreigners*, of eminent
 Character, especially for their skill in Political
 Affairs. I will lay no great stress upon Mr. *de*
Montmorency, Constable of *France**, who said,
 "that if the Calvinists in that Kingdom should
 "at length obtain the Liberty they pretended
 "to, the Monarchy would degenerate into a
 "Democracy." For as this Minister was a Pa-
 pist, his sentiments may on that account have
 the less weight. But the same objection does
 not lie against *Philip de Mornay*: that learned
 Nobleman was not only a Calvinist, but a prin-
 cipal Support of their Party in *France*. And
 yet he could not but acknowledge†, "that

* *Varillas Histoire de Charles IX.* p. 41. *Si les Cal-
 vinistes obtenoient en fin la liberté qu'ils pretendoient, la
 Monarchie degenereroit du moins en Democratie.*

† See Dr. Du Moulin's Preface to his Father's Book
 concerning the Novelty of Popery.

“ though the Presbyterian Government might
 “ do well enough in *Popular States*, such as
 “ *Geneva and Switzerland*, yet in Kingdoms
 “ or Monarchies, Episcopal Government was
 “ rather to be chosen.” And the same opinion
 in much stronger terms, and with a particular
 view to *England*, was professed by another Fo-
 reigner, who understood Politicks as well as
 most Men of his time, and was both a good
 Protestant, and had great candour in matters
 of Religion; I mean the celebrated *Rufen-*
dorf, who expresses himself in the following
 words*: “ In this respect likewise not a little
 s. o. n. i. a. t. e. n. e. n. t. e. b. l. u. o. w. d. e. g. e. n. e. r. a. t. e. i. n. t. o. s. Blemish

* *Dissert. Academ. Lond. Scan. 1675. p. 580.*
Hac quoque parte non parum Labis adhaerere multis
Calvinianorum judicatur, dum in Demogrationem nimio
amore propendent, & contra Monarchias versantur ad
eamque convellendas sunt proclives. Ejus Rei causa quidem
peritis non obscura est. Qui enim per Galliam, Helve-
tiam, atque Belgium, simul cum Pontificia Religione,
Autoritatem Pontificiorum Episcoporum ejuraverant, cum
novam Ecclesiae Administrationem instituerant, in Demo-
craticam Regiminis formam consenserunt; in qua & Mi-
nistri omnes inter se essent aequales, & ad Conventus Eccle-
siasticos Seniores quoque & Diaconi e Plebe adsciscerentur.
Cum autem semel in Rebus Sacris Plebs ad suffragium ad-
mitteretur, proximum fuit ut crederent Iniquum esse to-
tam Civitatem Unius Hominis voluntate regi. — Judi-
 cant

“ Blemish is thought to lie upon many of the
 “ Calvinists, as being too much inclined to af-
 “ fect Democracies, and being on the contrary
 “ averse to Monarchies, and forward to subvert
 “ them: The cause of which is well under-
 “ stood by Men of skill. For those persons in
 “ France, in Switzerland, and in the United
 “ Provinces, who, in discarding Popery, did
 “ at the same time throw off the Authority of
 “ the Popish Bishops, when they settled a new
 “ Form of Government in their Church, agreed
 “ upon one of a *Democratical* kind, in which
 “ all the Ministers were upon an equal foot,
 “ and for the management of their Church-
 “ affairs, had Elders and Deacons joined with
 “ them from amongst the People. Now
 “ when they were once admitted to a Vote in
 “ Ecclesiastical matters, the next step was for
 “ them to have a notion that it was *unjust* that
 “ a whole State should be governed at the will
 “ of one single person. Men of prudence judge

“ that
 cant *Prudentes ad Turbas istas quæ superioribus annis*
Angliam miserrimè exercuerunt non parum contulisse Dog-
mata Genevensia, quæ Juventus Anglicana ibidem studiis
operata aut ex eorum scriptis hauserat & in Patriam
sua disseminaverat.

“ that those Troubles with which *England* was
 “ some years ago most miserably afflicted, were
 “ not a little fomented by the *Geneva-Doc-*
 “ trines, which the *English* Youth that studied
 “ in that place, either learned there, or out of
 “ the Writings that came from thence, and dis-
 “ persed those notions into their own Country.”

IN this last Quotation, when *Puffendorf* says
 that the Calvinists are too much inclined to
 Democracies, he is not to be understood as if
 he represented *all* of that Sect as being at *all*
 times thus disposed: for no doubt, while the
 Kings under whom they live encourage and fa-
 vour them, they may *so long* be well enough
 pleased with their Government, and willing to
 support it. The Baron's meaning I take to
 have been, that the *popular* forms of their
 Church-Government, have a *natural Tendency*
 to raise Dispositions, which, when either they
 are soured by unfavourable treatment, or not
 enough sweeten'd by personal Interest under
 Monarchies, are apt to *lean* much towards po-
 pular Schemes. And of *this Tendency*, indeed,
 among the Independents, and other Sectaries,
 the Presbyterians themselves in 1645, appear
 to

to have been sensible: for the *London Clergy*, in a Letter written by them in that year from *Sion-College*, to the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, say, "It is much to be doubted, lest
 " the Power of the Magistrate should not only
 " be weakened, but utterly overthrown, *considering the Principles and Practices of the*
 " *Independents*, together with their compliance
 " with other Sects, sufficiently known to be *Anti-*
 " *Magistratical*." But might not the *Independents* have retorted this charge upon the *Presbyterians*, not only by putting them in mind of the part they had acted against the Crown for several years past, but also by quoting the declared sentiments of their great Leader *Mr. Cartwright*, who says *, "that the world is now
 " *deceived*, that thinketh that the Church must
 " be framed according to the *Commonwealth*, and
 " the *Church-Government* according to the *Civil*
 " *Government*; which, is as much to say, as if a
 " Man should fashion his *House* according to his
 " *Hangings*: whereas indeed it is *clean contrary*,
 " that as the *Hangings* are made fit for the *House*,
 " so the *Commonwealth* must be made to agree
 " with

* *Defence of the Admonition*, p. 181.

“with the *Church*, and the *Government thereof*
 “with *her Government*.—Otherwise *God* is made
 “to give place to *Men*.”—Mr. *Neal* acknow-
 ledges*, that the Puritans did not allow the
Church to be Monarchical. If therefore the Go-
 vernment of the State must (by Divine Right,
 as it seems) be suited to that of the Church, the
 conclusion is evident, that the Government of
 the State ought not to be Monarchical. From
 this, and other considerations, which the pas-
 sages that I have produced may suggest, the
 Reader, I trust, will be apprized that an *E-*
stablishment of a Presbyterian Form, would but
 ill agree with our *Civil Constitution*: and from
 thence he will be farther led to see, that in views
 of Policy, it would not be expedient that the
 vehement part of our Dissenters should be ad-
 mitted to a full Capacity of Offices, even sup-
 posing their Admission could, *at first*, be gained
 with Tranquillity and Safety: because their
 Principles and Dispositions would be thereby
 encouraged and spread; though not quite so
 much indeed as by an *Establishment*, yet cer-
 tainly

* *Hist. Pur.* vol. I. p. 133.

tainly more than would be *desireable* in the present Circumstances of our Nation.

BUT I must farther observe, as the point upon which this Question chiefly turns, that such an Admission of *all* Dissenters to a *free* Capacity of Offices, by an Abolition of the Test, will not be likely, in the present state of things, to be made, or at least *not long followed*, with such *Tranquillity* as some persons may imagine: on the contrary, it will be naturally productive of such Animosities, Contests, and Disorders, as will be very dangerous to the Welfare of the Nation. How much soever the Dissenting Interest may increase by the means above mentioned, yet it will not easily come to be equal to that of the Church. The Members of the latter will, for many years be, as they are at present, much above the Sectaries in *Number*, as well as in *Quality*, and *Estates*. It is true, indeed, that *all these nominal Church-men* are not to be *relied upon* for the Support of the Establishment: because Infidelity has for some years past exceedingly increased, and in consequence of it, a Regard for the *Instituted Parts* of Religion, and for the *Hierarchy* in particular,

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is very much lessened in the minds of many: The numerous Libels published of late, have had, in some measure, the Effect that was designed, of making Men *ill Church-men*, by making them regardless of several Doctrines of importance in Religion. A late Writer * on the side of the Dissenters, takes notice of this state of things, and does it in a very remarkable way. "The prevailing Opinion of *England*, says he, "is *Latitudinarian*; and *most Men* "in the Kingdom are so far *improved in their* "Judgments, as to believe that *Heaven* is not "ENTAILED upon any particular Opinions in "Religion, so as to sacrifice their Liberties in "defence of them." And another Writer on the same side †, after letting us know, "that "the *Friends* of the Dissenters, are seldom "found among *Ministers of State*, adds, that "they are to be found among such Gentlemen, "as have unto good parts and knowledge, "joined a *Freedom of Thought* and *free Enquiry* "into matters of Religion." We are very sensible

* Letter to Mr. Holden, Lond. 1733, p. 26.

† The Interest of the Protestant Dissenters Considered. Lond. 1732. 2d Edit. p. 18.

fible how far such Freedom and Latitude of Thought are often carried in the present Age: and can give some reasons why several of the Great Proficients in that way either are, or would seem to be, friends to the Dissenters; but still we trust that a Disregard to the Principles of Religion, has neither yet made, nor will ever make, so great a progress as some persons think. We doubt not but much the greater part of the People of *England* will continue to believe in JESUS CHRIST: and that most of them, from a well-grounded persuasion that Episcopacy was of Apostolical Institution, will preserve a suitable Veneration for it: so that though they may be prejudiced against some particular Prelates amongst us, yet they will not bear to see the Order it self set at nought, and thrown out, to make way for the Schemes of Innovating Spirits in modern times. They will rather think that the same Order which at first propagated and settled Christianity in the world, will be the best Bulwark against Infidelity and Popery at present.

AND even if this point should not be considered so much as it ought to be in Views of

Religion, yet most of the Considerable Families in *England* will, in all probability, be for supporting our Church-Establishment, as the most agreeable to our Civil Constitution. *Their own Interest*, join'd with that of the Publick, will induce them to it. Whatever Dispositions there may have been formerly, in some of our Noble and Antient Families to support and encourage the Dissenting Party; there are few, I believe, at present, who are not sensible that the State of things is so much altered, as to require a suitable Alteration in their Conduct. For they see that the Dissenters, very far from being under such Hardships as they were in some parts of the Reign of *Charles II.* have now all the Liberty that can be desired in respect to promoting their *Spiritual Welfare*. Their Profession and Exercise of their Religion are free and secure: they Educate their Children as they think fit; their Teachers settle themselves where they will; and assemble together as often as they please, with all the proper *Synodical Forms* to Consult and Act as they find expedient. So that their Case is no longer a matter of Compassion. Their views at present are turned to

the

the obtaining of *Power* and Influence, and the making themselves of weight in the State. But this increase of their secular Interest, has much less appearance of being for the service of the Civil Constitution, than it had for some years after the Restoration: for then the humour of a great part of the Nation ran strongly to exalt the Prerogative of the Crown, perhaps more than was really for the Interest of the Publick. On which account some Patriots of that time thought it right to promote the Dissenting Interest, as what would be a proper check and ballance against the Immoderate Growth of the Prerogative. But at present those Gentlemen, who know the true State and Interest of their Country, are sensible that there is no occasion for this method. There are other circumstances in the Nation, sufficient and more than sufficient to weigh against the Crown. In particular, they see that the Royal Prerogative is circumscribed and fixed by Law, so that none of those Stretches, that were formerly made of it on some occasions, can now have any place: That the Supplies which are requisite for the Maintenance of the Forces by Sea and Land,

de-

depend upon Annual Grants by the Parliament; and that even the Revenues for the Civil List expire, upon *each Demise* of the Crown : so that if, at any time when they are to be regranted, the Commons should be disposed, as they were for some time after the Revolution *, or should be wrought up to be yet more *jealous* of their Liberties, and willing to increase them, those Revenues might, in that case, be clogg'd with such conditions, as would make the *Power of the Crown precarious* : while, on the other hand, that of the People stands on a *sure bottom*, and must *constantly increase* : because the † *Property*,

* See *Burnet's History of his own Times*, vol. II. p. 42, 43.

† Mr. Moyle, in his *Essay on the Roman Government*, vol. I. p. 73. says, " That Land is the true Centre of Power : and that the Ballance of Dominion changes with the Ballance of Property. This, adds he, is an Eternal Truth, confirm'd by the Experience of all Ages and Governments, and so fully demonstrated by the great *Harrington* in his *Oceana*, that it is as difficult to find out new Arguments for it, as it is to resist the Cogency of the old."

Mr. *Nevil*, in *Plato Redivivus*, p. 141. affirms, " that the natural part of our Government, which is *Power*, is by the means of *Property* in the *Hands of the People* : " which Circumstance he said before, p. 37. " has made this Country *scarce Governable by a Monarchy*."

ly, the Source of *Power*, is vastly on their side against the Crown, even though the Nobility be added to it: and must come to be more so in length of time. All Gentlemen of sense must be aware of the Consequences which such a state of things will naturally produce: and, as one of it's effects already wrought, they see that the Spirit of Liberty runs with so strong a Course thro' the Mass of the People, that unless some very wise measures be taken, and constantly pursued to keep it in bounds, it must by degrees undermine and impair both the Aristocratical and Regal parts of our Constitution. They know that these two parts, including in the former the Landed Gentry, have a natural Connection of Interest with each other: that the Clergy in such an Establishment as our's, will be always, in some degree dependant upon them: and both from that Dependance, and from the manner of their Education, will be dispos'd, as far as they are able, to act for their Support, and for preserving the true Ballance of our Constitution: so that any Advantages possessed by the Clergy, that are not of differ-

vice

vice to their Spiritual Function, or the publick Good, are really so much Strength to the Gentry, the Nobility, and the Crown itself. And therefore if these should make any unnecessary breaches on the Clergy, they would in effect, cut through a Bank, which the Wisdom of their Ancestors has raised for their Defence, against that weight of the People, which the Scripture compares to the *many Waters*.

Upon these motives, therefore, of Interest, or of Conscience, or of both together, there is not much doubt but that the far greater part of the considerable Families will be for supporting the Establishment of the Church. And great numbers of the middle and lower People have so imbred a Veneration for that Church in which they have been baptized, and brought up, and for that Regal Government under which this Nation has so long flourished, and is at present so happy; that they will not easily be wrought off from their Adherence to them. So that if, on the one hand, the several Sects of the Dissenters joined with the Men of *Latitude*, and *Freedom of Thought*, and with those who are *averse*, or very indifferent to a Regal Government,

ment, do make an Appearance of great force *against* the Church of *England*; there will not be wanting, on the other side, a Body of Friends, united by Principles of Conscience, and by a regard to the true Interest of their Country, joined with their own, to act together as occasions may require, for the Support of this Establishment.

Now in these dispositions of the Nation, I think, they who know Mankind, will hardly avoid foreseeing that in case the Test-Act be repealed, there must great *Animosities and Contests* ensue: for the Dissenters will, in all appearance, presently apply themselves to gain an Interest in the Corporate Burroughs, and other Towns, to be chosen into the Government of them, to be put into the Commissions of Peace, and Lieutenancy, and all other Posts of Trust, Profit, or Influence, that may be within their reach: and probably, by supporting one another in their Applications for these Places, or enforcing it by the joint weight of their whole Body, when 'tis necessary, they must often succeed in their Pretensions. For we may judge what their manner of applying will be, from

what has been already said, by one who writes with an air of Importance among them, and hath thought fit to give the World the History of their Consultations and Proceedings, in order to procure the Abolition of the Test *. This Gentleman, having intimated that the Application of the Dissenters in *Ireland* for the Repeal of the Test-Act *there*, ought to have been enforced with the whole weight of the Dissenters in *England*; and having complained that *that* affair which had been promised by a very Great Man, as an *Earnest* of future Favours to the Dissenters in *England*, had shamefully miscarried; expresses his resentment in the following terms: " Are the Dissenters, says he, " to be *Thus treated, in the face of an Election?*

--- *Manifesta Fides, Danaumque patefcunt*
Insidiæ.--- Virg. Lib. II. l. 309.

The Reader will easily understand who is here accused of Breach of Faith, and who are reckoned

* *An Impartial Account of the late Transactions of the Dissenters*, Lond. 1734. p. 25, 26.

known Insidious Enemies to the Dissenters: He will perceive, by the Favours said to be promised in the *plural number*, that the bare repeal of *these Acts in question will hardly content them*; and he will observe what their manner of Application will be, to gain any Advantages they think themselves entitled to: whenever their assistance is *wanted* by the Crown, they will expect to be proportionably considered.

AND will dispositions or attempts of this kind, on the part of the Dissenters, to enlarge their Interest and Power, raise no concern at all in the Members of the Church of *England*? will these be in no degree solicitous to maintain their ground? will the Members of the Burroughs and other Corporations, be contented that Dissenting Ministers * at *London*, should *direct* them in the Choice of the Members of

* " There is a Minister in *London*, to whom the Town
 " of *Berwick* has, upon every new Choice, applied for his
 " *Direction* or Assistance, above one and twenty years,
 " and without whose *Influence*, the present Members had
 " never been so much as named amongst them." *Remarks*
upon a Paper entitled a Letter to Protestant Dissenters.
 Lond. 1732, p. 17.

their Bodies, and their Representatives in Parliament? will the antient Gentry, whose Families have always had a natural Interest in the Burroughs, be easy in seeing it undermined, and in a way of being reduced to little or nothing? will they negligently suffer a new Set of People to come in upon them, and cross their pretensions to every Post of Trust and Profit? will they be easy in seeing that Church which their Ancestors have endowed and protected, which all the Foreign Churches so greatly respect, and which the *Arguments* of the Dissenters have been unable to hurt, borne down by the Growth of their Secular Interest? will they not endeavour to form opposite Interests*, and take proper methods to prevent these Inroads? and must not these Measures produce Animosities, violent Enmities, and their dire effects? may they not give opportunities which persons disaffected to

the
 * "Can any one think that the *Bigotted and Self-Interested Clergy*, who, like *Harpies*, are watching all opportunities, will not seize the occasion to trumpet their *Seditious Alarms*, and endeavour again to spread false notions of the Church's Danger? *Reflections on the Cor- poration and Test-Acts.*" Lond. 1732. p. 23.

the Government will improve to its Disadvantage? may not *foreign* Enemies find their account in them? I think, any one who knows Mankind, and the present state of our Parties and Dispositions in *England*, must see that these consequences would be likely to follow upon a Repeal of the Test-Act. Clouds much less than these appear to be in prospect, have sometimes bred Storms which have torn up Governments by the roots.

Now if these be the *natural effects of such an Alteration*; if there be just reason to believe that it will produce Confusion, and Danger, or great Disadvantage to the *State*; then the *vehement* Dissenters, from whom this danger is likely to arise, may justly be excluded by any *fit* means, from having Offices that will give them too much Power and Influence in the State: For whatever Rights or Advantages any one may be entitled to as a good Subject of the Civil Government, they must all be submitted to considerations of the Publick Welfare. Whenever *this* requires it should be done, they may justly be abridged, in any degree which is necessary to it. For unless such a course was taken, it would

would be impossible in many cases for Civil Societies to subsist: and therefore acquiescence in this point is always a condition, upon which Men are Members of such Societies. Upon this ground was made that Act of Parliament, 8 *H. VI. chap. 7.* which appointed the Qualifications of those who should have a right to vote in the Elections of Knights of the Shires. By this Act that Right is allowed only to such persons as are possessed of 40 s. a year of Freehold Lands or Tenements; whereas before that time*, *all the Freeman* of the County had a right to vote in that case. But because, as the Preamble to the Act expresses it, "the late Elections had been
 "made by very great, outrageous, and excess-
 "five numbers of people dwelling within the
 "same Counties of the Realm of England, of
 "the which most part was of People of
 "small substance, and of no value, whereof
 "every of them pretended a voice equi-
 "valent, as to such Elections to be made, with
 "the

* "Hitherto any Man of *English* Blood promiscu-
 "ously had a right to give or receive a Vote."
*Nath. Bacon's Historical and Political Discourse of the
 Laws and Government of England. Continuation, p. 77.*

“ the most worthy Knights and Esquires dwelling within the same Counties : ” whereby “ Man-slaughters, Riots, Batteries, and Divisions among Gentlemen, and others of the said Counties, shall and may *likely* rise and be, unless convenient Remedy be had and provided in that behalf,” therefore the said Qualification is fixed : that is to say, in order to guard against a mere probability of some danger to come, the Right of voting was at once taken away from the far greater part of the People of *England*.

SOME Writers have been willing to account for the *Justice* of this Act, from the consideration that Men under 40 s. *per ann.* having as it were *no* property in Land, ought not therefore to have any vote for one to appear in Parliament on their behalf. But this circumstance is plainly insufficient to account for the Equity of this procedure. For such persons may sometimes have a very large *Property* in *Copyhold* and *Leasehold Lands*, in Moneys, in Stocks of Goods, and the like. At least they have the Liberties of their Persons, and other Rights, as Free-born *Englishmen* ; which are certainly

things.

things of value, and may be affected by what is done in the Parliament: and therefore in regard to these, they might justly claim a vote in the choice of their Representatives. No other Principle will account for their being deprived of this Right, but only the above-mentioned Consideration of the *Publick Danger* by their having it. Upon a Foundation of the same nature was made another Law in the Reign of Queen *Anne* *, which limited the Capacity of sitting in Parliament, as Representatives for the Counties, to those persons who have an Estate, Freehold or Copyhold, for their own Lives at least, of the annual value of 600 *l.* and the Right of sitting as Burgeesses, to those who have an Estate of the like kind, of the annual value of 300 *l.* each of which Estates must be above Reprizes. This was done in order to prevent needy Men, who might be likely to be corrupted, from having a Share in the Legislature, and to vest that Great Trust in those who have competent Estates. The Act is still in force; and is allowed to be reasonable, though probably, it affects a number of persons of very good

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* 9. of *Q. Anne*, chap. 5.

Characters, and Ancient Families, who might, otherwise, be both willing and able to serve their Country in this way. These Gentlemen, however, do not clamour at their being made incapable of that Honourable Trust, nor do those great numbers of the People of *England* who are deprived of their Right of voting for the Knights of the Shires, express any Uneasiness on that account. Now if such Abridgments may be made of Civil Rights, in order to *guard against probable Dangers*, in these cases, why may not the same course be taken on the like account, in the case of *vehement* Dissenters from the Church of *England*? The *danger of Mischief to the State*, from their being admitted to a free Capacity of all Publick Offices, would be at least as great, as from the Capacity of Men of less than 600 *l.* a year to be Knights of the Shires; or from the admission of Men of less than 40 *s.* a year Freehold to vote in Elections. There have been instances in the world, when Men of small private Fortunes have made good Senators.

"*Privatus illis Censur erat brevis,*

"*Commune Magnum.*"

"Their private Wealth was small, the Pub-

"lick great:"

says *Horace* *, of some of the *Roman* Senators in the best times of that Republick. There have been many instances when great numbers of People have met very quietly at Elections. But I do not remember any case, in which one part of a Nation being of a different Religion from the other, and having a fair prospect of making their Religion the *superior one*, were not disposed to endeavour it; nor can I think there will ever be such an instance, while the general Dispositions of Mankind continue to be as they are. For though our Dissenters have a turn of mind, in some respects peculiar to themselves, yet in this point they would be like other Men: so that the Laws which guard against such Dispositions on their part, towards the Established Church, are, at least, as justly founded as those other Laws, of which no Man complains. If, therefore, the Corporation and Test-Acts be

* *Carm. Lib. II. Ode 15.*

be *unjust*, and, as such, ought to be repealed, then the other two Acts must, upon the same Principle, be repealed likewise: and all the Free-Men of *England*, without any distinction, must be restored to their original Right of voting, and of being capable to be chosen, for Knights of the Shires. But if, without admitting this, the Justice of our present Laws relating to *Elections* can be maintained; then it must, by a *parity of Reason*, be acknowledged, that the Dissenters, as being *ill-affected to the Church*, and from thence likely to occasion disturbance and danger to the *State*, may have their Capacity of Publick Offices justly restrained, by the Laws that require the Sacramental Test.

To a general Reasoning of the kind here used, some persons have objected, that by the same way of arguing, these two things may be proved: *First*, that the greatest *Violences and Barbarities* possible, may in several cases be *justly* practised against Men on account of their Religion. And *Secondly*, that such Violences may, with full as *much Reason*, be acted by Men of a *false Religion*, against those of a *true*

one, by Heathens, for instance, against Christians, as by the *latter* against the *former*. Both these consequences are absurd: and therefore the Doctrine, from which they are *justly* deduced, must be false.

BUT to the former of these objections I beg leave to answer; That upon our Principle, *no Violence at all* can be justly practised against any Man, on account of *his Religion, merely as such*; but only as this Religion, either actually does, or, in all appearance, will incite him to use *Violence* on his part, in order to *deprive* his Fellow-Subjects of *Rights* annexed to their Religion by the *Laws* of their Country. If, therefore, the Objectors mean to represent us as maintaining that such *violent* courses as have been mentioned, may lawfully be taken against Dissenters from an Established Church, *without supposing* that these Dissenters *actually use*, or *design to use proportionable Violences* on their part, against the Establishment; they then draw a *false Consequence* from our Principle; which will warrant only such a Self-defence as is *necessary*, with regard to the Dispositions, and Powers of the Opponents. If they are *peace-*
ably

ably disposed, or not much likely to make disturbances, by forcibly attacking the Established Religion, then, against *Them*, *Violent Methods* will not be *necessary*, and therefore will not be *justifiable*. But if the Objectors will make the Supposition, that the Enemies of an Established Religion, break out into *Rage*, and *Tumult*, and *Open Force*; or even give *unquestionable Evidence* that they *design* to do so; Then, I make no difficulty of avowing that those *rough Methods*, which they themselves make *necessary*, may be justly used against them. For the Rights which the Subjects of an Established Religion have, in virtue of this Establishment, are upon the *same foot* as any others of their *Civil Rights*, and may justly be defended by the *very same Methods*. This no one can deny, unless he holds it to be *wrong* in the Civil Magistrate, to grant such Temporal Advantages, to the Professors of any particular Religion, as are implied in the notion of an *Establishment*: for instance, to provide them Places of Worship; to maintain, at the Publick Charge, the Persons who officiate in their Religion: and the like. If any one conceives that

that every thing of this kind is *unlawful*, he must then indeed dislike our putting the Rights which thus accrue to any Religion, upon the same bottom with other Rights of a *Civil nature*. But as few persons, I believe, will openly avow this to be their Opinion; as, on the contrary, it will be generally granted, and is evident in itself, that the Magistrate may lawfully give such Advantages to a Religion: it must from hence plainly follow, that as long as his Laws to this purpose are in force, the *Rights* which the Professors of a Religion so favoured, *derive from those Laws*, may, and ought to be considered as standing on the *same ground* with other *Civil Rights*, and therefore may justly be defended by the *same Methods*. Thus when the Anabaptists at † *Munster*, from a mixture of Enthusiasm and Villany, attacked the Established Religion and Government with *open Violence*, it was undoubtedly lawful to use *Force* against them: and it was as lawful to do the same against *Kenner*, and the other Fifth-Monarchists in *England*, notwithstanding they declared that they were *led by God* to what they did *.

† See Sleidan's *Hist. of the Reformation*, translated by E. Bohun Esq; Lond. 1689. B. X. p. 190.

* Echard's *History of England*, vol. III. p. 43. NOT

NOT that I would here be understood, as if I justified the use of such *Tortures*, in any case of this kind, as are employed by the *Romish* Inquisition, against Hereticks and others accounted Enemies of their Established Church. For though some persons have been pleased to affirm, that this is a necessary Consequence of our Principle, and have thereupon made sad lamentations, to move the tender-hearted part of Mankind; yet in reality, these terrors are only the products of their own imaginations, and have no just connection with what we maintain. Our Doctrine, as I have said, will justify only those Measures of FORCE *that are needful for a reasonable Self-defence*; but *such Tortures* cannot ever be *needful for that purpose*; and therefore they cannot *justly* be employed.

To make this appear, I would ask the Objectors, What course they think might justly have been taken, if the *English* Papists in the Reign of King *James* the Second had risen in Arms, and declared that they had no Intentions to hurt the Civil Government, which they greatly approved, but only to subvert the

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undue Establishment of the Protestant Religion? I believe the Objectors will allow that all *needful degrees of Force* might have been justly employed, in order to subdue them: that if they had made Resistance, they might have been killed; and if they had been taken Prisoners, they might have been punished, either with Death, or with Exile, or Imprisonment, as would have been most expedient for the Publick Welfare. But the Question that I would ask, is, Whether they might, in this case, have been justly *Tortured*, after the manner practised by the Popish Inquisition? I presume our Objectors will answer in the negative: and their reason will be, that such *Tortures* could not have been *needful*, either to the Safety of the Publick, or to that of private persons; and therefore they could not have been *justly* used. Now this very thing we can full as well say with regard to any other *Opponents of our Establishment*, to whatever *Extremities* they proceed. For our Principle will have no farther Consequences against such Opponents, than the Principle held by the Objectors will have against the *Papists*, in any case like that which has been

been

been mentioned. So that we are, in reality, no more chargeable with the *Cruelty* of such Consequences, than the Objectors are themselves: which I humbly desire some Gentlemen to remember, when they think of declaiming next upon this Subject.

In answer to the *second* Objection above-mentioned, I will not allow that *all Establishments* are *equally rightful* in themselves. For *in truth*, and *with respect to God*, no Person or State *can* have a *Right* to protect or encourage *Falsehood*, or use any *influencing* Method against the Truth. A Prince who maintains the Teachers of Mahomedism, or Popery, is unjustifiable in so doing; and will be accountable for his Conduct to God the great Searcher of Hearts hereafter. But I do allow, that when a *false* Religion is *actually established*, it is upon the same foot as if it was *true*, with regard to Men: that is to say, the Professors of a *True* Religion have *no right* to use any *forcible* or illegal Methods to overthrow the false one. For the *Truth of a Religion* does not give it's Professors *any right to a Civil Establishment*: because, though it be the Duty of *all*

Men to promote the true Religion by all proper Methods in their power ; and consequently the *Magistrate*, in every Society, is obliged to provide for the Service of God, and the Instruction of his People in a right way, that is, to *establish* the true Religion ; yet God has left it to the *private Judgment of the Magistrate*, as well as to that of every other Person, to *determine for himself which is the true Religion* : No other Man hath a Right to *make the Magistrate submit to his Judgment* in this point : and therefore, supposing the Magistrate *Errs*, and *establishes a false Religion*, he will indeed be accountable *to God* for that wrong Judgment, but he is not accountable *to Men* ; nor can they have a right to demand that he should make a Civil Establishment in favour of that Religion which he disapproves. For *Civil Emoluments*, are, by the Constitution of all Societies, entrusted to the Disposal of the Supreme Magistrate, who has a right to judge upon *what Persons* they may, *most fitly*, be bestow'd : and his Judgment, though it should *be wrong*, yet ought to be *submitted to* by all private Members of the Society, so far, as that they

they ought not to use any illegal or violent methods to oppose it: which if Christians should do, they may be *as justly punished* by an *Heathen* or *Mahomedan* Magistrate, as private Subjects of these latter Persuasions might be punished for the like proceedings, in a Country where the Christian Religion is Established. In this respect, I grant that *all Established Religions*, whether they be *true* or *false*, are upon *an equal foot*: And this concession I do not take to be at all *absurd*, or of any weight against our Reasoning, but to be founded upon the visible *Necessity* there is for Civil Government, in order to the welfare of Mankind.

THIS Government could not long subsist, if any persons, under pretence that their Religion, as being the *true one*, ought to be *Established*, had a *Right* to *oppose*, and endeavour by *forceable* Methods to subvert the Establishment, already made by the publick Authority. This must be a source of *perpetual Confusions*; which God cannot be supposed to allow. And therefore the Supreme Magistrate, in order to the maintenance of Peace in the Society, must have a Right to oblige all persons to acquiesce

under his Establishment, and be contented with a *safe Profession* and *Exercise* of their own Religion, though without any Civil Emoluments annexed.

SUCH *Profession and Exercise*, indeed, ought to be *allowed* to all persons who are of a Religion, *that will be consistent with the welfare of the Civil State*; or will not put them upon disturbing it. Because every Man hath a natural Right to *judge* for *himself* in matters of Religion, and to *practise* accordingly. That Right, if it were always *duly* and *peaceably* exerted, could never *hurt* any *Civil State*: and therefore it ought not to be taken away, or in any wise abridged, supposing it is *probable* that it will be *so* exerted. But whenever it is *in fact*, or *in all appearance will be*, used in *such a way* as to *disturb* the *Civil Government*, which is absolutely necessary to the welfare of Mankind, and therefore must in all Events be supported; then, even that Right of professing and exercising *such a Religion* is so far *forfeited*, and may be restrained, by all the methods that are *necessary* to this purpose.

UPON

UPON this ground our Laws against the Papists are made, and may very well be justified. *Their Religion is inconsistent with the welfare of our Civil Government*; and therefore some Penalties are laid upon the Exercise of it, and much greater on those who are perverted to it*.

THE case of Protestant Dissenters from our Church is indeed very different. They are well affected to the *Civil State, considered by itself*; and may practise their Religion, without any disadvantage to it. They ought therefore to be, as they are, allowed a free Profession and Exercise of it. But as their Affection to the Civil State, is joined with a settled *Ill-will to the Church*; as there is a very great *Probability* that if they were admitted, without any restraint, to Publick Offices of Trust and Profit, they would be as *able*, as they would be *willing*, to *hurt* that Establishment of the Church, which is very *conducive to the Interest of the State*; and as their Attempts, or *known Dispositions of this kind*, would occasion Animosities, Contests, and Disturbances among the People:

From

* 23 Eliz. 1 Par. 2, 3, 4.

From all these Premises, the Consequence is plain, that out of a due regard and concern for the *Publick Welfare*, the *vehement* Dissenters may *justly* be restrained by any *fit means*, from taking Offices in the State. This is the first of the general points that I proposed to make appear.

THE other point with which I am concerned, is to shew, that the *present Method*, in which this Restraint is laid upon Dissenters, by obliging all Men who take Offices, to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, is also *lawful*. The Objections against this method are, That it *perverts the Design* of this sacred Institution, and *occasions much Wickedness* in *unworthy Receivers*. In answer to which, I *first* observe, that our Laws apparently *mean* to require that this Sacrament should be at all times received in Commemoration of Christ's Death, and with Sentiments of heart becoming that Remembrance. For they require it should be received as our Church enjoins; whose Declaration to this purpose in her Liturgy, is, with all the other parts of that Service, confirmed by

by the Act of *Uniformity* *. This Act, which is now in force, was so likewise at the time when the Test-Act passed. And as subsequent Laws must be designed to agree, in their meaning and intent, with all those precedent ones that are unrepealed; the Test-Act therefore in requiring that all Persons who take Publick Offices, should receive the Communion according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, must be supposed to require that they should do it with such Dispositions of heart as the Church expects from them. Now the Minister who notifies the time of a Communion, is directed to acquaint the Congregation, “ that he pur-
 “ poses to administer to all such as shall be re-
 “ *ligiously and devoutly disposed*, the most com-
 “ fortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of
 “ Christ, to be by them received in remem-
 “ brance of his meritorious Cross and Passion,
 “ whereby alone we obtain Remission of our
 “ Sins, and are made Partakers of the Kingdom
 “ of Heaven.——He is to exhort them in
 “ the mean season, to consider the Dignity of
 “ this Holy Mystery, and the great Peril of

* XIII, XIV. *Charles II. Chap. 4.*

“unworthy receiving thereof: and so to search
 “and examine their own Consciences, and that
 “not lightly, and after the manner of Diffem-
 “blers with God, but so that they may come
 “holy and clean to such an heavenly Feast.
 “Therefore, says he, if any of you be a Blas-
 “phemer of God, an Hinderer or Slanderer of
 “his Word, an Adulterer, or be in malice or
 “envy, or in any other grievous crime; repent
 “you of your sins, *or else come not to that holy*
 “*Table.*” — These passages shew how unjustly
 Mr. Chandler * has reproached *our Church*
 “*with Encouraging Infidels, Hereticks, and*
 “*Libertines into her Communion.*” And as the
 meaning of the Test-Act ought to be considered
 as agreeing in this point, with that of the
 Church; it is plain that this Law cannot justly
 be charged with *intending* to require any thing
 contrary to the Nature or the End of the Sa-
 crament.

Nor can it be, with truth, objected, that
 the Act of receiving it on occasion of a Civil or
 Military Office, does *necessarily raise any con-*
trary

* *Vindication of a Passage of the Lord Bishop of Lon-*
don's second Pastoral Letter. Lond. 1734, p. 38.

trary Dispositions of mind. For it is evidently *possible* in the nature of the thing, that a Man who communicates on such an account, may, notwithstanding this, piously remember the Sufferings and Death of our blessed Saviour on our behalf; may have suitable movements of gratitude for them; may form resolutions of obedience to his Laws; and may, in particular, from thence be disposed to real affection for all Mankind: which Dispositions our Lord designed should be excited or preserved, by this solemn Act in remembrance of his Death.

IF the Objectors will not allow this to be *possible*, they must then maintain, that *no Man ever did receive the Sacrament worthily, when he did it on occasion of a publick Office.* But this they will hardly presume to affirm. For if they reflect on the Number, the Quality, and Characters, of the Persons who *have received it* on such occasions, they will, I believe, find reason to grant that *some* in this number *have done it worthily.* And supposing this granted, in the Case of *some* persons, it follows that the *legal obligation* which men may be under to communicate at a particular time, on a *Civil*

Occasion, does not, necessarily or in the nature of the thing, prevent any man from taking this sacrament at the same time, as he ought to do it in Obedience to *Christ*: If this be true, then all Men have it entirely in their power to communicate worthily, notwithstanding they do it, partly on a civil Account: And admitting this, there is plainly no ground for saying "that the Sacrament is turned from it's original design to a purpose against it's own nature and end." For though indeed the Law obliges a Man, if he takes an Office, to communicate with the Church of *England*, and from his so doing, makes a conclusion, which it applies to a Civil purpose; yet, as his Act of receiving the Sacrament may, at the same time, effectually serve all those purposes of Religion, for which it was at first intended, it is evident, that the Sacrament is not, by the Law, in any degree perverted or abused.

BUT the Enemies of the Test-Act are loud in affirming, that however possible it may be to communicate worthily upon taking an Office, yet the contrary is often known to be done; and Men are guilty of very great sins upon such occasions:

casions: which sins, though indeed they are principally chargeable on themselves, yet are also to be justly charged on that Act: for without such a Law, there could be no such wickedness; and therefore the Law is justly blameable, because it not only *occasions* sin, but lays Men under *temptations* to it: which practice is repugnant to Christian Charity, and to those express passages of the Holy Scriptures, that forbid us to lay *Stumbling-blocks*, or occasions to fall, in the way of our brethren.

IN order to answer this Objection, which has indeed a greater appearance of weight than any other that lies against the Test; the first point to be determined, is, whether *all* Actions which, to other Persons, will be *Occasions* or *Temptations* to Sin, are, on that account, *unlawful*? Our Objectors will hardly maintain the affirmative, if they consider the practice of our Saviour and his Apostles. For our Lord himself in going to festival Entertainments, greatly *offended* the scrupulous Pharisees, and in some sense, *occasioned their sinning*, as they did, by throwing unjust reproaches * upon Him.

R 2

Again,

* Luke vii. 34.

Again, when he trusted what Money he had to *Judas Iscariot*, he knew that the custody of it would *tempt* that ill-disposed Man to be a *Thief*, as he actually * was. And to mention a case that more nearly relates to the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper,——In the time of the Apostles a *Feast of Charity* was joined to the Communion, before or after it; in which the poorer sort of Christians were entertained at the expence of the more wealthy. This might very easily *tempt* some Persons to come to the Communion *chiefly* or *wholly* with a view to partake of the Feast that went with it. We have reason to think it did so: for † some came *hungry*, others got to be *drunk* there. Now in the cases here mentioned, was the Sin of the Pharisees, or that of *Judas*, chargeable, in any degree, upon our Saviour? Or were the *Love-Feasts*, on account of the ill effects they had upon vicious Christians, *unlawful* to be continued? The former of these questions needs no answer: and the latter may safely be answered in the negative. For, certainly,

* *John* xii. 6.

† *1 Cor.* xi. 21.

tainly, if the Apostle had judged that those Feasts were unlawful, he would have *suppressed them*; which was not done: for we find that they were commonly used * in the Church, for more than two hundred Years after our Saviour. From these Examples, and from the Nature of the thing it self, it is sufficiently evident that an Action may sometimes be *innocent and right*, notwithstanding that it *leads* other persons into *Sin*. And yet I do also readily allow, that ill consequences of this nature, may, in several cases, make Actions *unlawful* that would not be so if those consequences were away.

OUR farther enquiry therefore must be, in what cases an Action *innocent or indifferent in its own Nature*, becomes *unlawful*, by it's being, to others, an *Occasion of Sin*. Now I humbly conceive, that a general Rule in this matter is, that such an Action will be *unlawful*, whenever it is done *without a sufficiently important Cause* on the part of the Agent, so that it proceeds *from a want of due Charity in him* towards those whom his Action will affect. Both Rea-

* See Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, B. XV. Ch. VII.

son and the Scripture agree in teaching us that Men are not born for themselves only. We are strongly obliged to promote as far as we are *able, (morally speaking)* the Good of others, as well as our own. And the former of these, whenever it is of very great moment, ought to be pursued in *preference to,* and in some measure *at the expence* of the latter; supposing that the Damage or Inconvenience that we shall suffer on that account will not be *too grievous*. Whoever is unwilling to give up, thus far, his own Advantage, in order to prevent a very great Mischief from coming upon others, especially a Mischief of a spiritual nature, is *wanting in the Charity* required by the Gospel: And an action repugnant to this great Duty, must always be *unlawful*.

THIS Case is the Subject of the fourteenth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*. Some scrupulous Christians were at that time in danger to be *offended, or led into Sin*, by seeing others eat certain Meats, which though they were indifferent in their own nature, and therefore *innocently* eatable by those who had no scruples about them, were, by the weak brethren,

then, accounted *unlawful*. In this state of things, Saint *Paul*, with regard to the ill effects that would be occasioned by eating those Meats, determined that even the *unscrupulous* Christians were obliged to forbear them; and that to do otherwise would be a *Sin*. The ground of which decision I take to have been, that as these Persons could, *without any great Inconvenience to themselves*, get other Meats to subsist upon, it would therefore be a want of *Charity* in them to eat *this offensive kind of Meats*, and by so doing lead their weak brethren into Sin. But let us suppose the case had been such, that the unscrupulous Christians could not have abstained from the offensive Meats, *without very great Damage to themselves and to the Publick*. For instance, that in a Town closely besieged, no other but *Horse-flesh*, accounted unlawful by the weak Christians, had been procurable; and at the same time, the Constitutions of the unscrupulous Christians, who were far the more in number, had been such as would have *suffered extremely* unless they were allowed to eat *some kind of Flesh*. Would a hundred Christians of this lat-

ter sort, have been obliged to abstain from eating that Flesh, and so *ruin their Healths, of great moment to the Publick*, merely to avoid offending a few such weak and ill-judging brethren? I think this will not easily be said, or at least not made good.

I will put another case to the same purpose, that may fall in more with common life. There is one who has somewhat of mine in his possession, which he thinks to be his own; and I know that his Temper is so warm and obstinate, that he would be likely to defend his possession of this thing, by all the methods in his power, especially by taking iniquitous advantage of the Forms of Law: by doing which, against my just claim, he would probably be guilty of many Sins. I grant that in such a case, as far as *I only* am concerned, I should be obliged to forbear, either suing at Law, or taking any other method that would probably *put this Man upon sinning*, for a matter of *no great moment* to myself. But will any one say, that I should be under the same obligation of forbearance, if an *Estate of great Value and Importance to me*, and to my Family, were thus in question between

tween us? undoubtedly I should not. Because though Charity may oblige me to prevent any hurt to my Neighbour, as far as I can do it *without great damage* to myself; yet when I must *suffer much* by so doing, a regard to myself then justly takes place of my concern for him. This is the determination of *Grotius* * in the case. “We cannot avoid all “things, says he, that may occasion other Men “to sin: but those things we are obliged to “avoid, which we are not put upon, either by “*necessity*, or any *advantage*” [of considerable moment.]

AND if this rule holds in *private cases*, it may undoubtedly be followed in those that relate to the *Interest of the Publick*. For, unless this were allowable, no Civil Societies could long subsist: because hardly any regulations could be made for the Publick Welfare, that might not prove *Occasions of Sin* to some Persons or other. And therefore the Interest of all such Persons, *unreasonably offended*, especially of those

* *Annot. ad XIV. Rom. vers. 13.* “*Occasiones om-
nes alienorum Lapsuum vitare non possumus; sed vitan-
de sunt eæ, ad quas necessitate nulla, aut utilitate im-
pellimur.*”

who sin, *not from error*, but *presumptuously* against the clear Light of their Consciences may justly be made to give way to the Safety or Interest of the Publick. Upon this Principle divers of our Laws are continued in force, which yet are known to be *Occasions* or *Temptations to much wickedness*. For instance, the Laws which lay so high Customs upon several Commodities, *occasion* and *tempt* Men to the practice of importing them in a clandestine way without paying the Custom. The Laws which oblige Men to take *Oaths* upon the Entry of Goods at the Custom-House, and in many other cases of the like nature, do often *tempt them to Perjuries*; which would doubtless be prevented, in a great degree, if there were no such Laws. But because the Interest of the Publick *requires* them, they may very well be *justified*, as even our Dissenters, I think, will allow. And by a *most evident Parity of Reason*, the Corporation and Test-Acts may *equally be justified*, whatever ill Consequences follow upon them, with regard to those who *unworthily* receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, on account of Offices in the State.

HOWEVER, I do very freely acknowledge that if *any other method* could be found out, not *liable to these ill* consequences, and *equally effectual* to *secure the* Establishment of the Church of *England*, from the attempts of those who are ill-disposed to it, our Legislators would be obliged, in regard to the Spiritual Interest of some of our Fellow-Subjects, to prefer such a Method to that of the Sacramental Test. And I believe that whenever such a method shall be proposed, it will readily be pursued by our Superiors in the *State*, without any dislike on the part of those in the Church. Indeed if we judge from the publick Acts, and well-known Temper of most of her Clergy, the Disposition of the Church of *England* towards the Dissenters, appears to be truly moderate and christian. She is very willing they should enjoy all that *Liberty of Profession* and *Worship* which they think needful to their *Spiritual Welfare*. She heartily wishes they may use it so, as to find and embrace *the Truth in Love*: and if they do not, she commends them still to the Mercy of God, and prays that He will not lay their *Schism* to their charge. But with

this *Christian Charity*, she has, as she ought to have, a proper mixture of *Christian Prudence*; so much as is needful to guard herself from suffering by their Prejudices against Her. She cannot but fear what might be, at proper conjunctures, the workings of such Spirits, as can take offence at the Colour and Shape of a decent Vestment, or at a Posture of the Body expressive of fitting Humility and Reverence in the Worship of God. She has found by experience, that they who have *strained* at things of this sort, have made no scruple to swallow her Revenues, and lay waste her Sanctuaries. She only desires to be secured against such Usage in the time to come: and to be maintained upon that bottom, which is necessary to prevent *Strife* and *Confusion*, and thereby to preserve to all Parties, a full and well-regulated Liberty of Religion. To this purpose, the wisest Men of all ages have been sensible, that an *Establishment* of some one Religion is necessary: and the Church of *England* having been planted from the beginnings of the Reformation, and having hitherto brought forth much good fruit, to the Honour of God, and the Welfare of this

Kingdom,

Kingdom ; it is but reasonable she should keep her Station. Accordingly, She trusts that all faithful Members of her Communion, however they may be otherwise distinguished into Parties, will use their Endeavours to support her in it ; and she humbly hopes that the Blessing of God will make them successful.

T H E E N D.



(155)
kingdom; it is but reasonable the should keep
his station. Accordingly the rule that all
faithful servants of God should follow, how-
ever they may be employed, is to be faithful
to God, and to his service, to support
him; and the humble hope that the Blessing
of God will make them successful.

T H E E N D

